UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Reference Guide

Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism

1st Edition

| 1 CONFLICT PREVENTION | 2 GOOD GOVERNANCE | 3 ENGAGING COMMUNITIES | 4 EMPOWERING YOUTH | 5 GENDER EQUALITY | 6 EDUCATION | 7 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS |

1. Message

from the Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism

As Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism I am glad to introduce this PVE Reference Guide for the Development of National and Regional Plans of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE).

Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

PHOTO: UN Photo/Mark Garten

Addressing the rise of violent extremism that is conducive to terrorism is a difficult challenge for the international community. Fear, mistrust, intercultural clashes, conflict, destruction and unrest are just some of the ills that violent extremism fosters and exacerbates. This scourge cannot be eliminated through a single solution, method or tool. Identifying effective measures requires concerted effort by the international community and the promotion of effective practices and proven methodologies for a comprehensive approach that can address the complex drivers of violent extremism. Sharing of information, cooperation and collaboration is not only essential between the United Nations entities, but also between donors, beneficiaries, regional organizations, think tanks and expert bodies who work in this field on a daily basis.

In July 2016, the General Assembly passed resolution 70/291, which invited Member States and regional organizations to consider the development of their own PVE Plans consistent with the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. To take action on this important mandate, the UNOCT organized an Inter-Agency Expert Retreat on the Development of National and Regional PVE Action Plans in Manhasset, New York, on 22-23 February 2017, in which a wide variety of United Nations offices, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups participated. The good practices and lessons learned, showcased in the Reference Guide, are the product of this Retreat.

Several Member States and regional organizations have already adopted or are developing PVE Plans with the support of the United Nations, upon their request. A range of Member States and regional organizations are requesting the United Nations and other stakeholders to support their efforts to develop National and Regional PVE Action Plans which must ensure national and regional ownership and political commitment. This Reference Guide builds upon the available practice, and seeks to enhance the capability of Member States and organizations to direct and tailor the development of their PVE plans, while also providing practical guidance for stakeholders shepherding the process.

I hope practitioners around the world will find the Reference Guide useful for their efforts to address the drivers of violent extremism at the local, national and regional levels. We would also look forward to their suggestions and advice to improve the next edition of this Reference Guide.

I would like to thank all participants of the CTITF PVE Retreat and contributors to this document and those who contributed to our discussions on this topic of vital importance to preventing violent extremism and terrorism through their wide-ranging expertise and know-how. ●

Vladimir Voronkov
Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
Chairman of the CTITF
Executive Director of the UNCCT

2. Foreword

by the Chair of the CTITF Inter-Agency PVE Working Group

Starting with the drafting of the United Nations PVE Plan of Action, the CTITF Inter-Agency PVE Working Group has been instrumental in establishing an "All-of-UN" approach on the prevention of violent extremism.

Following General Assembly resolution 70/291 which recommended the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations PVE Plan of Action, the Secretary-General designated the Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to act as the main focal point of the United Nations system for the prevention of violent extremism. He also requested the CTITF Inter-Agency PVE Working Group to work on ensuring the coherent support to requesting Member States in implementing the PVE Plan.

In order to spearhead the "All-of-UN" implementation of the United Nations PVE Plan of Action, the Secretary-General established a High Level PVE Action Group, which consists of the Heads of the 22 Agencies, Funds and Programmes working on PVE. The CTITF Inter-Agency PVE Working Group supports the High Level PVE Action Group through six deliverables focused on mapping United Nations system PVE efforts and exchanging information and good practices.

Together with key United Nations partners, UNOCT has developed this Reference Guide to exchange good practices and guidance on the development of national and regional PVE Plans with the support of the CTITF Inter-Agency PVE Working Group. The Reference Guide suggests overarching, procedural and substantive principles, and indicates implementation illustrations that can serve as guidelines for Governments and regional organizations to develop their own effective PVE Plans of Action. Recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all-model, these guidelines place emphasis on inclusive and comprehensive action plans that address the context-specific drivers of violent extremism based on evidence-based policies.

I would like to thank all United Nations entities for their constructive feedback and comments that made the development of this Guide possible. I hope that this Reference Guide will provide meaningful support for devising policy that effectively addresses the drivers of violent extremism.

Jehangir Khan
Director
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

3. Background

Violent extremism is a grave threat to the main pillars of the work of the United Nations

It transcends cultures and geographical boundaries and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or ethnic group.

While traditional, kinetic counter-terrorism operations have shown some success, they do not address the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism. There is an urgent need to move upstream and address the drivers of violent extremism more effectively.

For this reason, developed through the framework of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674-A/70/675) was presented to the General Assembly in 2016. The PVE Plan proposes a practical, inclusive and comprehensive approach to give more content to Pillar I and IV of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy which focus on measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism. The United Nations PVE Plan of Action provides more than 70 recommendations to Member States and the United Nations system to support them. One of the key recommendations of the PVE Plan is for Member States and regional organizations to consider developing their own National and Regional Plans of Action.

125 Member States, 23 international and regional organizations, 26 UN entities, as well as 67 civil society organizations and private companies discussed the PVE Plan and identified areas of convergence during the International Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism on 7 and 8 April 2016, which was co-chaired by the Secretary-General and the Swiss Foreign Ministers.

The General Assembly consensus resolution on the Fifth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/70/291) recognized in operative paragraph 40:

"the importance of preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and in this regard recalls its resolution 70/254 of 12 February 2016, in which it welcomed the initiative by the Secretary-General and took note of his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, recommends that Member States consider the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Plan of Action, as applicable to the national context, encourages United Nations entities, in line with their mandates, to implement relevant recommendations of the Plan of Action, including by providing technical assistance to Member States upon their request, and invites Member States and regional and sub-regional organizations to consider developing national and regional Plans of Action to prevent violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, in accordance with their priorities and taking into account, as appropriate, the Secretary-General's Plan of Action, as well as other relevant documents."

Whether assisting in the adoption of PVE plans or responding to requests for support, the assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners to Member States and regional organizations, in the development of PVE Action Plans, will be guided by the mandate contained in operative paragraph 40 with a view to address Member States' priorities upon their request.

Subsequent to the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 70/291, the Secretary-General established a High Level PVE Action Group, consisting of 22 Heads and Principals of UN Secretariat Departments, Agencies, Funds and Programmes to spearhead the "All-of-UN" implementation of the United Nations PVE Plan of Action. The Secretary-General tasked the Office of Counter-Terrorism to act as Secretariat to his High Level PVE Action Group and the CTITF Inter-Agency Working Group on Preventing Violent Extremism, which is supporting the work of the High Level Group.

As part of six concrete deliverables of the CTITF PVE Working Group (the UN Reference Guide, the All-of-UN Matrix of PVE Projects, the UN Repository of Best Practices, the UN Directory of PVE Focal Points, the UN Virtual Resource Group of PVE Experts, and PVE Resource Mobilization), the Office of Counter-Terrorism organized an Inter-Agency Expert Retreat on the Development of PVE Action Plans in Manhasset, New York, on 22-23 February 2017. The Retreat brought together a diverse range of senior experts and practitioners, including Ambassadors, Special Envoys as well as representatives from regional organizations and the Foreign Ministries of Member States,

who contributed a wide range of perspectives from their respective regions of the world.

The Retreat also benefitted from senior level participation from the United Nations and other international organizations, working in Headquarters and the field, as well as research institutions, think tanks, and civil society. This included representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the World Bank, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), International Organization for Migration, United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI), the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the United Nations Alliance for Civilizations (UNAOC), the Office of the United Nations Youth Envoy, the Offices of the SRSGs for Sexual Violence in Conflict and Children in Armed Conflict and experts from civil society and research institutions, including Hedayah, the Global Movement of Moderates, ICT4Peace, Silatech, the United States Institute of Peace, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, International Peace Institute, the International Crisis Group, MercyCorps, the Prevention Project, the International Center for Counter-Terrorism and the Institute for Economics and Peace.

During their time at the Retreat, stakeholders participated in a series of thematic sessions, targeted working groups and substantive discussions that fostered a free exchange of information and experiences that culminated in participants completing detailed Work Sheets on overarching, procedural and substantive principles for national and regional PVE plans. By harnessing the extensive expertise that participants provided, the Office of Counter-Terrorism developed this practical Reference Guide for an "All-of-UN", multi-stakeholder approach to develop national and regional PVE Plans of Action. ●

Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the Security Council ministerial-level open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, stressing that conflict prevention must be the priority.

PHOTO: UN Photo/Marie Frechon

4. Guiding Principles

for the Development of National and Regional PVE Action Plans

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Retreat participants identified three sets of guiding principles that they consider essential for the consideration by Member States in the development of comprehensive and integrated national and regional PVE Action Plans.

These three categories of principles are:

1. Overarching Considerations
When developing National and Regional PVE plans, nine overarching principles may be considered to provide essential guidelines to follow, so that those involved in creating PVE plans receive broad-based political support and national ownership, address the specific challenges and circumstances in the particular context, and remain consistent with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its review resolutions and the United Nations PVE Plan of Action.

2. The Process
A one-size-fits-all model for a PVE plan does not exist. However, participants identified several procedural and institutional principles that could guide a step-by-step proce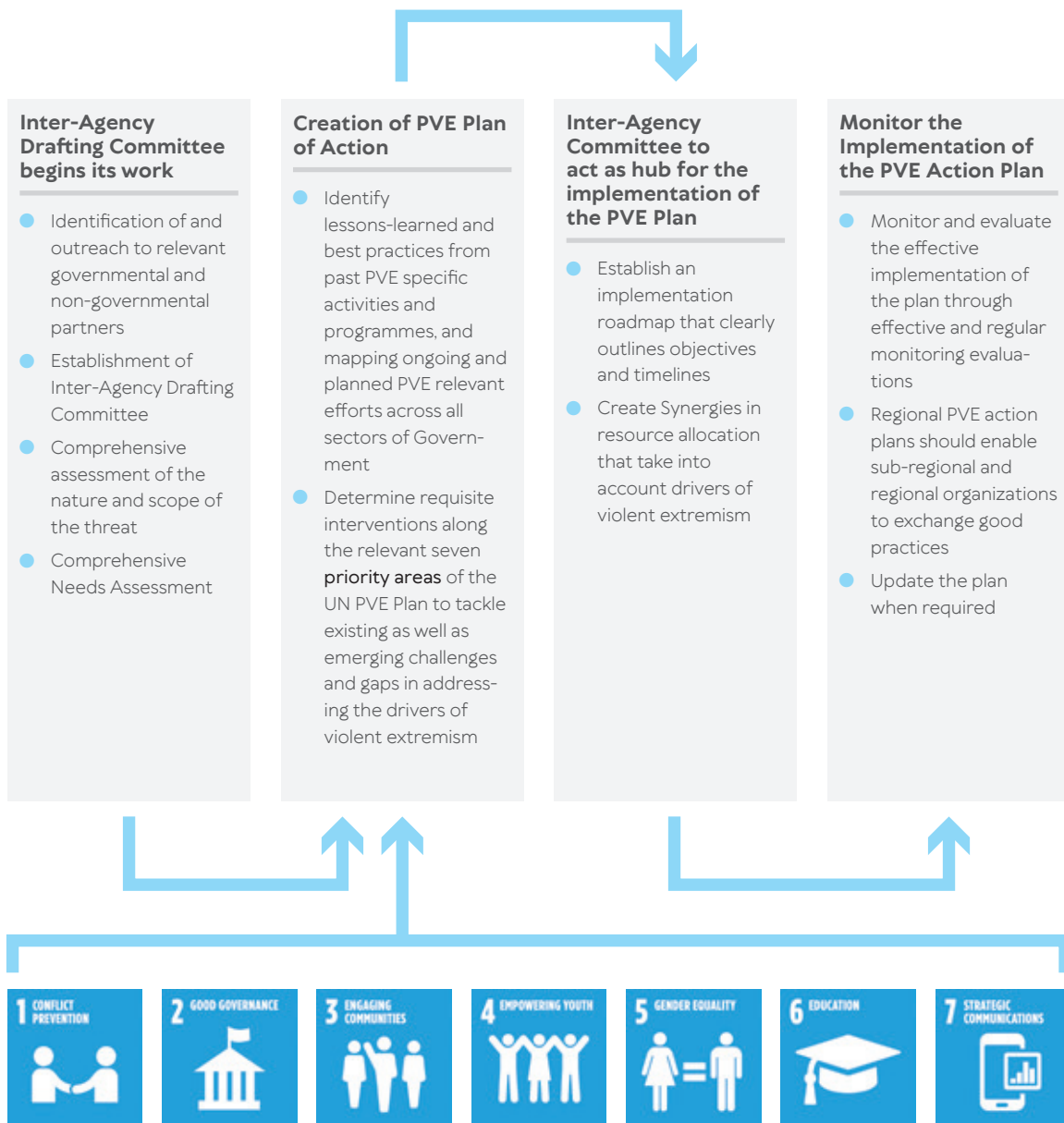ss in developing National and Regional PVE Action Plans that range from the creation of cross-cutting committees to ensuring the establishment of monitoring and evaluation processes for projects and initiatives for greater effectiveness in the future.

3. The Substance of National and Regional Plans
The Seven Priority Areas of the United Nations PVE Plan could be integral to any newly created National and Regional Plan. The implementation of these seven priority areas would ensure a balanced and well-structured plan that can address all facets of violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism. Every National and Regional Plan will be unique and may focus more on one of the seven areas due to their specific needs and regional context, however; areas should best not be neglected or favoured over others to ensure balanced and sustainable Plans of Action.

These recommended categories of the principles are based on the framework and guidance provided by the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288) and its five reviews, the United Nations PVE Plan, a literature review including the 'Bogota' Principles, the Hedayah Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies work and Member State practices around the world. ●

Designing, Developing and Implementing National PVE Plans

Inter-Agency Drafting Committee begins its work

- Identification of and outreach to relevant governmental and non-governmental partners
- Establishment of Inter-Agency Drafting Committee
- Comprehensive assessment of the nature and scope of the threat
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Creation of PVE Plan of Action

- Identify lessons-learned and best practices from past PVE specific activities and programmes, and mapping ongoing and planned PVE relevant efforts across all sectors of Government
- Determine requisite interventions along the relevant seven **priority areas** of the UN PVE Plan to tackle existing as well as emerging challenges and gaps in addressing the drivers of violent extremism

Inter-Agency Committee to act as hub for the implementation of the PVE Plan

- Establish an implementation roadmap that clearly outlines objectives and timelines
- Create Synergies in resource allocation that take into account drivers of violent extremism

Monitor the Implementation of the PVE Action Plan

- Monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of the plan through effective and regular monitoring evaluations
- Regional PVE action plans should enable sub-regional and regional organizations to exchange good practices
- Update the plan when required

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The seven strategic priority areas of the United Nations PVE Plan of Action

Secretary-General António Guterres.

"We must build on the work that has been done with the support of Member States, the Youth Envoy and civil society. But this cannot be an initiative by old people discussing the younger generation. The United Nations must empower young people, increase their participation in society and their access to education, training and jobs."
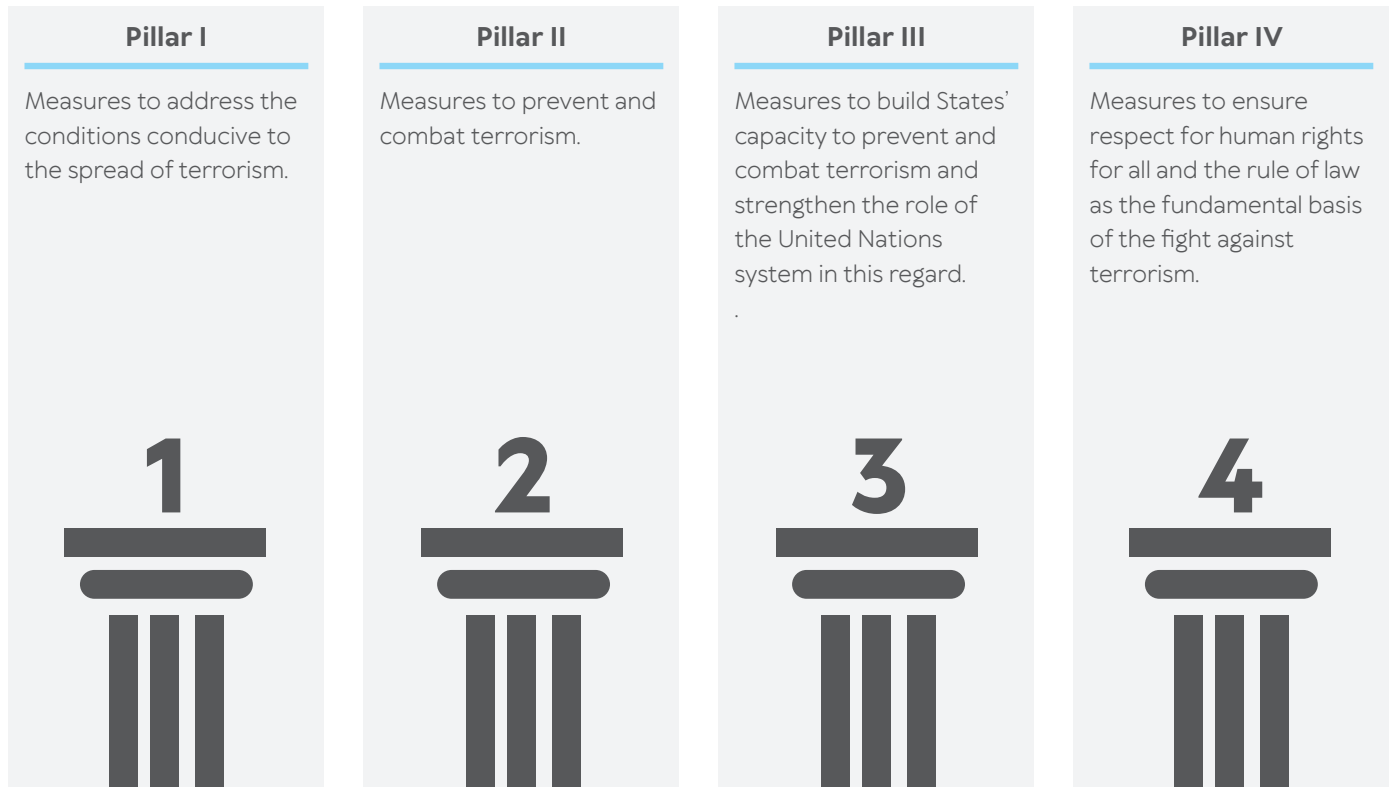
—Secretary-General António Guterres

A_Beneficiaries of PVE Plans

This Reference Guide was created to aid United Nations Member States in the development of both National and Regional Plans of Action. This guide contains comprehensive and practical guidance on how to adapt the UN PVE Plan of Action into one that is specific to the national and local contexts. National and public sector ownership of PVE Plans of Action are both critical to preventing violent extremism. At the same time, engaging and empowering youth and women while fostering gender equality must be central in designing, drafting and implementing PVE Plans. Youth, as positive agents of change and the future generation of leaders, are critical to PVE efforts worldwide. National officials and the public sector should view youth as a main partner in the prevention of violent extremism.

Nearly 40% of the world's population is 24 years and younger, the number of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 is 1.1 billion. This is the largest proportion of youth in history and they must be a central part of global PVE efforts to curb violent extremism in the future.

Overarching Principles for the Development of PVE Plans

Pillar I

Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

1

Pillar II

Measures to prevent and combat terrorism.

2

Pillar III

Measures to build States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and strengthen the role of the United Nations system in this regard.

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3

Pillar IV

Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.

4

These are the Four Pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288).

B_Overarching Principles for the Development of PVE Plans

When developing National and Regional PVE plans, the following nine overarching principles may provide essential guidelines to consider, so that stakeholders ensure that PVE plans receive broad-based political support and national ownership, address the specific challenges and circumstances in the particular

The United Nations Statistics Commission

Handbook of Statistical Organization

In order to track trends and collect relevant data, the United Nations Statistics Commission has compiled good practices, fundamental principles, implementation, and reference materials and links on how to derive indicators to monitor and collect relevant data related to a study. The United Nations Statistics Commission published a Handbook of Statistical Organization which gives recommendations on how to organize a national statistics agency from the ground-up and how to design statistical studies. The handbook details how to coordinate multiple data collecting agencies, staff agencies, create policies for a chief statistics agency, and establish solid foundations for data collection. National PVE stakeholders and policymakers may want to use this document to ensure that their own statistics and data are in accordance with international standards.

The Statistics Commission also maintains a database for a repository of statistical standards and published methodological work by international organizations. These organizations include: the UN Secretariat, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), the Commonwealth of Independent States, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and others. The database is divided among multiple subjects ranging from communications to forestry to demographics and social statistics. National officials looking to be more informed about the modalities of collecting and analysing data may want to begin by examining the United Nations Statistics Divisions expansive and detailed resources. ●

context, and remain consistent with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288) and its review resolutions.

1. The **primary responsibility** for implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the United Nations PVE Plan **rests with Member States**. Member States and, where applicable, regional organizations should consider developing their PVE plans based on the principle of national ownership. Plans, therefore, should reflect and conform to their specific regional, national and local contexts and needs.[1]

2. **The United Nations PVE Plan should be implemented by Member States through developing National and Regional PVE Plans of Action under the overarching framework of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 as well as the broader conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda.[2]

3. The **role of the United Nations** in regard to developing and implementing National and Regional PVE Action Plans is to support Member States and regional organizations at their request and only with their consent.[3]

4. **PVE plans should be developed in a multidisciplinary, inclusive and holistic manner** that draw input from a variety of Government actors and levels, such as law enforcement, social service providers and relevant Government ministries, regional and local authorities, as well as non-governmental actors, including youth, families, women, religious, cultural and educational leaders; local communities; civil society organizations; the media; and the private sector. Throughout the entire process, from conceptualization to implementation and evaluation, governments should integrate such a **diversity of**

1. A/RES/70/291, para. 39, 40; UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44, 56; UN Secretary-General's Statement at the first meeting of the High Level PVE Action Group on 27 October 2016; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 2.

2. A/RES/70/291, para. 39, 40; UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 56, 57, 58; UN Secretary-General's Statement at the first meeting of the High Level PVE Action Group on 27 October 2016..

3. A/RES/70/291, para. 39, 40; UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 7, UN Secretary-General's Statement at the first meeting of the High Level PVE Action Group on 27 October 2016; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 2

4. The mentioned entities and actors are non-exhaustive. The particular context may also merit, for example, the inclusion of teachers, psychologists or existing hybrid institutions such as Ombudspersons

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are closely interlinked to the PVE Plan of Action's 7 priority areas, especially in the areas of society and economy. National PVE Plans should reinforce the SDGs and thus utilize synergies between sustainable development and preventing violent extremism. The graphic depicts the SDGs in three universal tiers (economy, society, and biosphere) that cover all 17 SDGs.

INFOGRAPHIC: Azote/Jerker Lokrantz

stakeholders and incorporate their feedback into the development of national PVE plans.[5] The processes related to National and Regional PVE Plans of Action should be participatory at every stage, from their design to evaluation, to ensure broad ownership of the Plan and its continuous monitoring and updating. Lessons learned from the implementation of the PVE Plans should be owned by the same stakeholders.

5. PVE plans should be evidence-based—using standardized, sex disaggregated, and empirical data—and contextualized to respond to local, national and regional challenges through the analysis of local circumstances and conditions on the ground.[6] Closer cooperation should be fostered among practitioners involved in advocacy, research and policymaking to support such analyses and to ensure evidence-based initiatives and policies.

6. Tailored to the context-specific drivers, PVE plans should support the social compact against violent extremism by promoting respect for human rights, including the principle of equality before the law and equal protection under the law in all government-citizen relations. In this regard, PVE plans should develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels, as well as ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making to address the context-specific drivers of violent extremism.[7]

UNOCT: Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria

During the fourth biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy held in September 2014, Member States expressed concern at the growing phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Syria. As a result, the Secretary-General announced that the United nations Centre for counter-Terrorism would, in cooperation with those Member States that wished to participate, gather information on the motivation of FTFs through direct interviews of returnees. By analysis of the results, the Secretary-General aimed to provide Member States with a stronger knowledge base from which to understand the phenomenon of FTFs, assess the risks they posed, and develop effective responses.

The study, published in July 2017, found several key findings that can help bridge the current knowledge gap on FTFs. Focused on their motivations to go to Syria, socioeconomic characteristics, and motivation to leave and return to their place of residence or nationality, the findings suggest that friendship circles and social networks are the most dynamic and powerful mechanism through which recruitment occurs, with the internet playing a far less significant role as an independent source of radicalization than is generally assumed. The survey also suggests that economic factors, particularly the opportunity for economic self-betterment, are more relevant to the recruitment of FTFs as a push factor than was the case in previous years. Economic, social, and political analyses of this sample group all suggest that marginalization creates vulnerabilities and those vulnerabilities facilitate recruitment by transnational terrorist organizations.

A full version of the report can be found here:

http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/assets/img/Report_Final_20170727.pdf

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5. The mentioned entities and actors are non-exhaustive. The particular context may also merit, for example, the inclusion of teachers, psychologists or existing hybrid institutions such as Ombudspersons.

6. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44 (a); Summary of Guiding Principles for Counter-Terrorism Strategies, UNCCT International Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Bogota, Colombia, II. A. 1., B. 1.; Hedayah Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies.

7. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44 (b)

Do-No-Harm Principle

Guiding government efforts to prevent violent extremism

While much of the guidance of Do-No-Harm relates to humanitarian assistance from organizations, many of the principles can guide government efforts to prevent violent extremism. Analysing sources of tension, group linkages as well as programme objectives, consequences and options—the main components of Do-No-Harm—are particularly relevant for mapping the drivers of violent extremism and the complex paths to radicalization leading to violence, which are often influenced simultaneously by State and non-state actors, foreign organizations as well as family and friends. As an authoritative source on local social, political and economic dynamics, governments can apply principles of Do-No-Harm to deconstruct the many layers of radicalization leading to violence and map common drivers that are intertwined with specific geographic locations, cultural and social pressures, as well as personal and historical grievances. By using Do-No-Harm to unravel and connect the actors and events along the path to radicalization leading to violence, governments will be better suited to craft prevention strategies and policies that effectively serve at-risk communities, ensure vulnerable individuals receive appropriate support to avoid radicalisation leading to violence, and support marginalised groups as allies for the reintegration and early detection of violent extremists. ●

7. PVE plans should contribute to the attainment of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** in addressing the drivers of violent extremism, specifically through:

   a. Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere (Goal 1);

   b. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (Goal 4);

   c. Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (Goal 5);

   d. Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8);

   e. Reducing inequality within and among countries (Goal 10);

   f. Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11); and

   g. Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16).[8] Target 16.a of Goal 16 aims at strengthening relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

8. **PVE plans should closely align with the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Countering Violent Extremism to Prevent Terrorism; the Women, Peace and Security agenda**, including the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015) and national and regional action plans on women, peace, and security; the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; United Nations youth engagement**, such as the mandate expressed in United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security; and be consistent with **international human rights law** obligations of the State and region and align with relevant national human rights action plans.

9. **PVE plans should be based on a "Do-No-Harm" approach**, so that they avoid adversely impacting the work of related Government Ministries and Departments, such as Education, Development, Interior, Religious, Youth and Women's Affairs Ministries, and services provided to the population, particularly people in vulnerable situations. Similarly, related Government Ministries and Departments should ensure that policies are PVE-sensitive and developed in a manner that promotes "Do-No-Harm" in the national or regional PVE agenda. ●

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8. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44 (e); see also A/RES/70/291, preamble para. 33.

The What, Who, and How of Developing a PVE Plan of Action

WHAT	Identifying Actors	Identifying Threat & Drivers of Violent Extremism	Identifying Actions	Drafting the PVE Plan	Adoption of the PVE Plan	Implementation of the PVE Plan
WHO	● Government ● Established Partners	**Inclusive Working Group** ● Government ● Civil Society Organizations ● Community Leaders ● Youth and Women ● Researchers ● Private Sector	**Inclusive Working Group** ● Government ● Civil Society Organizations ● Community Leaders ● Youth and Women ● Researchers ● Private Sector	**Drafting Committee** (selected smaller steering group from larger Inclusive Working Group)	**If Executive Act:** Highest Executive Entity **If Legislative Act:** Parliament	**Interagency PVE Policy Committee** (to be established through the adoption of the PVE Plan)
HOW	● Outreach & Consultations ● Creating an Inclusive Working Group	● Threat Analysis & Needs Assessment ● Commissioning Empirical Research into the local/national Drivers ● Consultations among identified Stakeholders	● Identifying Policy/Institutional Mechanisms to Address the Drivers ● Identifying relevant National, Regional & International Good Practices, including the UN PVE Plan of Action ● Identifying Existing and Required Resources	● Drafting in Multiple Stages to allow for continuous improvements through internal and external Consultations on Drafts with Inclusive Working Group	**If Executive Act:** Executive Order/Policy **If Legislative Act:** Adoption of Law/Legislative Act ● Publication & Dissemination	● Establish implementation roadmap ● Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation ● Periodic Proposals for Adjusting the PVE Plan

1. Establish → 2. Gather → 3. Analyze → 4. Develop → 5. Implement → 6. Monitor

C_Procedural and Institutional Principles for the Development of PVE Plans

A one-size-fits-all model for a PVE plan does not exist. Nonetheless, experts have identified several procedural and institutional principles that could guide a step-by-step process in developing National and Regional PVE Action Plans:

1. The development of PVE plans should start with the **identification of and outreach to relevant governmental and non-governmental partners** to include them and their views in the analysis of the threats and drivers of violent extremism as well as the development and implementation of the PVE Plan.[9]

- Relevant Governmental Agencies
- The Media
- Youth and Women
- Civil Society Actors
- The Private Sector

2. The next step should be to set up an **Inclusive Working Group** of partners, identified in Step 1. When possible, a gender balance in Working Group participants is encouraged. This step should be accompanied by trust and team building exercises. The Inclusive Working Group should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of participants.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

- Identifying threats, reviewing existing policies and analyzing the corresponding context, local, national, and regional drivers
- Identifying lessons learned and best practices, determining requisite interventions

3. The **Inclusive Working Group** should begin its work with a **comprehensive needs assessment**, which includes:

    a. Identifying threats and analyzing the corresponding context, local, national and regional drivers and vulnerabilities; drivers can be distinguished between "push factors", or the conditions conducive to violent extremism and the structural context from which it emerges, and "pull factors", or the individual motivations and processes, which play a key role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action;

Sample Push Factors

- Lack of Socio-Economic Opportunities
- Marginalization & Discrimination
- Poor Governance, Violation of Human Rights and the Rule of Law
- Prolonged and Unresolved Conflicts
- Radicalization in Special Environments (e.g. Prisons)

Sample Pull Factors

- Individual Backgrounds and Motivations
- Collective Grievances and Victimization stemming from Domination, Oppression, Subjugation or Foreign Intervention
- Distortion and Misuse of Beliefs, Political Ideologies and Ethnic and Cultural Differences
- Leadership and Social Networks

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9. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44 (a); Summary of Guiding Principles for Counter-Terrorism Strategies, UNCCT International Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Bogota, Colombia, II. A. 3., B. 3.; Hedayah Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 3 and 4; see also A/RES/70/291, para. 11, 12 and 13.

b. Reviewing existing legislation and policies that seek to address the drivers of violent extremism to offset potentially existing and prevent unintended new negative consequences, including their human rights impact;

c. Identifying local, national, regional and international lessons-learned and best practices from past PVE-specific activities and programmes, the United Nations PVE Plan of Action, and mapping ongoing and planned PVE-relevant efforts across all sectors of Government and other actors;

d. Determining requisite interventions to tackle existing as well as emerging challenges and gaps in addressing the drivers of violent extremism, identified during the previous steps;[10] and

e. Identifying measures to mainstream the prevention of violent extremism in existing Government strategies, for example, relating to youth and women engagement to amplify PVE efforts.

4. From its midst, the Inclusive Working Group should select individuals for a **smaller Drafting Committee** to synthesize the requisite set of actions and interventions relating to the comprehensive needs assessment in the **draft PVE Plan of Action**. The drafting process should continue to be **inclusive**, **gender-balanced**, **transparent** and **consultative** through ongoing consultations with experts and relevant stakeholders.

5. Depending on the respective constitutional requirements, the PVE Plan of Action may be **adopted** by the highest executive entity or the legislature in order to ensure a maximum of ownership and democratic legitimacy.

6. With the adoption, the PVE Plan of Action should foresee the establishment of **a new Inter-Agency PVE Policy Committee** to supervise and manage the implementation of PVE plans. This committee should conform to the following characteristics:

a. Guided by a clear **political mandate**, with **Terms of Reference**, that clearly distinguish the **roles and responsibilities** of participating entities and partners;

b. Functions as a **hub for coordination** with and between sub-national and local, governmental authorities and initiatives;

c. Act as conduit to consolidate **international and regional support**, including technical assistance, capacity-building as well as the mobilization and distribution of resources; and

d. Foresee **dispute settlement or reconciliation**

mechanisms to overcome potential challenges between the various stakeholders in order to guarantee effective long term cooperation. [11]

7. PVE plans should include an **implementation roadmap** that clearly outlines the objectives, outputs, timelines as well as resource and capacity allocations for addressing the push and pull factors of violent extremism.[12]

8. PVE plans should create synergies in **resource allocation** that take into account the interdependence of political, social and economic drivers of violent extremism. Investment in prevention is far more cost-effective than allocating resources to mitigating consequences. Government authorities and organizations should as relevant, thus, consider shifting the balance of existing funds dedicated to counter-terrorism towards preventing violent extremism. Diversifying resources and harmonizing funds across sectors are also important aspects of creating synergies in PVE resource allocation. Governments as well as regional and international institutions should consider making existing programmes in counter-terrorism, security and other relevant sectors more PVE-sensitive by evaluating programmatic components that address PVE drivers or overlap initiatives specified in PVE plans and to overcome their possible unintended negative consequences.[13]

9. **Disseminate the PVE action plan** to all relevant stakeholders and partners and build awareness at the national and local levels.

10. Effective implementation of PVE plans requires **monitoring and evaluation mechanisms**. Regular monitoring and evaluation will help identify the strengths and weaknesses of PVE plans, so that stakeholders can recalibrate plans to meet specified objectives, in

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10. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44 (b)

11. Summary of Guiding Principles for Counter-Terrorism Strategies, UNCCT International Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Bogota, Colombia, II. A. 3., B. 3; Hedayah Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 7.

12. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44 (g); Summary of Guiding Principles for Counter-Terrorism Strategies, UNCCT International Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Bogota, Colombia, II. A. 1., B. 1; Hedayah Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 8

13. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 46 and 47; Summary of Guiding Principles for Counter-Terrorism Strategies, UNCCT International Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Bogota, Colombia, II. A. 3, B. 3.; Hedayah Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies.

UNDP: Journey to Extremism in Africa

On 7 September 2017, UNDP launched a study on violent extremism in Africa through gathering data and leveraging its own long-established presence, partnerships and expertise to contribute to preventing the threat of violent extremism across Africa in six countries (Cameroon, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan).

The study draws from an unprecedented 495 interviews with former recruits from multiple violent extremist groups spanning the continent. The research process was developed with the objective of understanding the dynamics of the recruitment process, from its initial conditions and factors, through to the 'tipping point' that triggered particular individuals to take the step of joining a violent extremist group where others did not. The respondents who voluntarily joined violent extremist groups identified, in order of strongest to weakest reasons, religious ideas (40%), being part of something bigger (16%), employment opportunities (13%), joining with friends and family (10%), ethnic principles of the group (5%), political ideas of the group (4%), adventure (3%), and other reasons (10%).

The study found that 51% of respondents selected religion as a reason for joining violent extremist groups but 57% admitted to limited or little understanding of religious texts. Also, the study touches on economic factors that are a key dimension of individuals' vulnerability to narratives that invite them to channel grievances into the cause of extremism. The study found that 69% of interviewees joined violent extremist groups by choice, 20% were referred by a community or family member, and 11% were forced to join. On reintegration and rehabilitation, 55% are in a formal process sponsored by state rehabilitation programmes or NGOs such as Amnesty International, 41% are arrested or in detention facilities, and 4% are still current members of their violent extremist organizations. Respondents were 49% fighters, 14% recruiters/trainers, 12% intelligence providers, 11% domestic service providers, 5% wife to a fighter, 4% community police, 4% commanders, 3% tax collectors, and 3% in other capacities.

A full version of the study can be found here:

http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf

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Characteristics of the Inter-Agency PVE Policy Committee for the Implementation and Monitoring of the PVE Plan

- Guided by a clear **political mandate**, with **Terms of Reference**, that clearly distinguish the **roles and responsibilities** of participating entities and partners.

- Foresee **dispute settlement or reconciliation mechanisms** to overcome potential challenges between the various stakeholders in order to guarantee effective long term cooperation.

- Act as conduit to consolidate **international and regional support**, including technical assistance, capacity-building as well as the mobilization and distribution of resources; and

- Functions as a **hub for coordination** with and between sub-national and local, governmental authorities and initiatives;

the short- and long-term, and ensure corresponding initiatives adhere to the principles of "Do-No-Harm." [14]

❗ Particular to Regional PVE Plans of Action:

11. Based on regional ownership and political will, **regional PVE action plans** should enable sub-regional and regional organizations to exchange good practices and provide technical assistance to Member States to build their capacity to prevent violent extremism. Sub-regional and regional organizations can enhance cooperation and information sharing among Member States and bolster regional ownership and political will. [15]

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14. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 44 (g); Summary of Guiding Principles for Counter-Terrorism Strategies, UNCCT International Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Bogota, Colombia, II. A. 1., B. 1; Hedayah Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 11.

15. A/RES/70/291, para. 30, 40, 47 and 64; UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 45; Summary of Guiding Principles for Counter-Terrorism Strategies, UNCCT International Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies, Bogota, Colombia, II. B.

Comprehensive PVE Action Plan

1 CONFLICT PREVENTION **2** GOOD GOVERNANCE **3** ENGAGING COMMUNITIES **4** EMPOWERING YOUTH **5** GENDER EQUALITY **6** EDUCATION **7** STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

D_Substantive Principles and Implementation Illustrations for PVE Plans

The United Nations PVE Plan provides recommendations within several key thematic areas that National and Regional PVE Action Plans should incorporate to effectively address the internal and external drivers of violent extremism. Substantive recommendations are provided in the areas of:

a. dialogue and conflict prevention;

b. good governance, human rights and the rule of law;

c. engaging communities;

d. empowering youth;

e. gender equality and empowering women;

f. education, skills development and employment facilitation; and

g. strategic communications, the Internet and social media.

In these seven substantive areas, National and Regional PVE Plans of Action may foresee the development of new and the adaptation of existing programmes and projects to address the drivers of violent extremism in the specific national and regional context. Cross-cutting and interdependent PVE solutions are relatively new approaches, so it is important to distinguish PVE specific programmes and initiatives, such as development or poverty reduction programming, that may be PVE relevant and include these existing programmes into a comprehensive approach.

An important distinction is made in the focus of the approach. The programmes and projects of a PVE-specific approach diagnose and target local, national, regional and/or international drivers of extremism, in particular, and benefit groups that have been identified as vulnerable, specifically to radicalization or harm from violent extremist groups. The box below provides guidance on how to distinguish PVE-specific from PVE-related programming.

1 CONFLICT PREVENTION

1. Dialogue and Conflict Prevention

The use of modern information technologies to spread poisonous violent extremist ideologies, the challenges of preventing new conflicts, wide-spread availability of small arms, persistent cross-border flows of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and heightened media attention for extremist groups have all contributed to the rising challenge of violent extremist groups, including in taking control of swaths of territory, resources and populations. The result is a vortex of protracted conflicts, ungoverned spaces and constrained development that fuels violent extremism.

The development of National and Regional PVE Plans provides an opportunity to foster dialogue and build trust among the main stakeholders within a country or region, and therefore, complement efforts to diminish conflict. Taking into account this complementarity, it is worth considering the coordination of PVE components with existing peace operations and their work programmes and linking PVE Plans to mechanisms for achieving and maintaining peace, in situations where violent extremists contribute to conflict. During more peaceful situations, PVE Plans of Action can be tooled to be well-embedded or linked with efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace, in particular United Nations Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/262.

A range of strategic methods can be applied within PVE Plans to help foster dialogue and conflict prevention. These include:

● Reinforcing earlier engagement to allow for more effective diplomacy;

● Introducing alternative options for preventing violent extremism;

● Promoting tolerance through intra- and interfaith dialogue

and preventing the distortion and misuse of beliefs, cultural practices and expressions, political ideologies, and ethnic and cultural differences;

- Facilitating advocacy on tolerance and respect for human rights and security;
- Empowering civil society, community leaders and credible voices to reject violent ideologies, leadership and social networks;
- Promoting cultural diversity and mutual understanding;
- Protecting cultural heritage and preventing the destruction of cultural artifacts and disruption of cultural practices and expressions; and
- Developing educational and employment programmes that encourage individuals to leave violent extremist groups.[16]
- Preserve the heritage of cultural and religious diversity against the attempts by violent extremists to disrupt cultural practices and expressions, that are of significance to the bearers and symbols of pluralism and tolerance;
- Promote the integration of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in programmes for the prevention of violent extremism.
- Ensure the viability of intangible cultural heritage practices

and expressions related to conflict prevention and resolution as a resource for dialogue and social cohesion

United Nations PVE Plan: Recommendations for National and Regional PVE Action Plans to address the drivers of violent extremism in the area of Dialogue and Conflict Prevention

Engagement:

1. Engage opposing parties and regional actors earlier on and seek to forge international consensus so as to give regional and United Nations diplomacy the leverage that it needs to broker solutions. Delaying engagement reduces options, and increases financial and human costs;

2. Engage religious leaders to provide a platform for intra-and interfaith dialogue and discussions through which to promote tolerance and understanding between communities, and voice their rejection of violent doctrines by emphasizing the peaceful and humanitarian values inherent in their theologies. Religious leaders also have a responsibility to themselves to seek such understanding. Tolerance is not passive: it demands the active choice to reach out on a basis of mutual understanding and respect, especially where disagreement exists;

3. Convene regional and national dialogues on preventing violent extremism with a range of actors, encompassing

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16. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 49.

Excerpts of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) relating to conflict prevention:

"**37. Emphasizes** in this regard the importance of Member States' efforts to develop non-violent alternative avenues for conflict prevention and resolution by affected individuals and local communities to decrease the risk of radicalization to terrorism, and of efforts to promote peaceful alternatives to violent narratives espoused by foreign terrorist fighters, and underscores the role education can play in countering terrorist narratives;" ●

youth engagement, gender equality, the inclusion of marginalized groups, the role of municipalities, and positive outreach through social media and other virtual platforms.

Preservation:

4. Preserve the heritage of cultural and religious diversity against the attempts by violent extremists to destroy manuscripts, objects and sites that are symbols of pluralism and tolerance;

Reintegration and Rehabilitation:

5. Encourage individuals to leave violent extremist groups by developing programmes that place an emphasis on providing them with educational and economic opportunities. To avert perceptions of injustice which might result from extending assistance to these perpetrators, such programmes should not draw from initiatives

Dialogue and Conflict Prevention

- Convening regional and national dialogues on PVE
- Encouraging individuals to leave violent extremist programmes
- Exploring creative alternative dispute mechanisms
- Preserving cultural heritage and diversity
- Engaging opposing parties and regional actors in early stages
- Compliance with laws and UN values

Excerpts of General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 related to Dialogue and Conflict Prevention:

"**37. Emphasizes** that tolerance, pluralism, respect for diversity, dialogue among civilizations and the enhancement of interfaith and intercultural understanding and respect among peoples, including at the national, regional and global levels, while avoiding the escalation of hatred, are among the most important elements in promoting cooperation, in combating terrorism and in countering violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and welcomes the various initiatives to this end;"

"**44. Calls upon** all Member States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to cooperate in efforts to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including by preventing the radicalization to terrorism and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, including children, preventing foreign terrorist fighters from crossing their borders, disrupting and preventing financial support to foreign terrorist fighters, and developing and implementing prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for returning foreign terrorist fighters, and in this regard encourages all Member States to develop effective strategies to deal with returnees, including through repatriation, in accordance with relevant international obligations and national law;" ●

addressing the needs of the wider civilian population;

Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:

6. Explore opportunities to introduce alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation, arbitration and restorative justice, to resolve conflict and achieve sustainable peace;

Compliance with International Laws and Regulations:

7. Ensure that, in circumstances where military action becomes necessary to counter the expansion of violent extremist groups, any such response is in full compliance with international law, in particular with the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law;

Member States, regional organizations as well as United Nations Departments, Agencies, Funds and Programmes have initiated various programmes and activities to foster dialogue and prevent conflict, as a means of addressing the drivers of violent extremism.

United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect:

Fez Plan of Action on the role of religious leaders in preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes

Messages and lessons that religious leaders impart can have tremendous influence over the actions of society and play a significant role in both the prevention and incitement of violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. The Fez Plan of Action, facilitated by the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, harnesses the unique influence of religious leaders by consulting them in the creation of principles and strategies that can guide religious leaders, of all faiths, in taking effective action to prevent and counter incitement to violence. The Fez Plan prescribes several options for mitigating tension between groups, which includes dialogue with individuals and groups that hold extremist views, disseminating positive and alternative speech, as well as supporting interfaith dialogue, education and activities.

Implementation illustrations:

- Conduct Government outreach and engagement activities with community, youth, women, and religious leaders, such as roundtables and town hall meetings, to decrease exclusion and isolation, avoid stigmatization, encourage civic engagement and demonstrate how a thriving, inclusive community comprises the strongest front against violent extremism;

- Identify and support the work of credible intermediaries, including traditional or religious leaders, civic activists, artists, teachers and media professionals, to highlight signs of radicalization to violence and the recruitment techniques of violent extremists and strengthen early warning mechanisms;

- Conduct dialogue with religious leaders on their roles in preventing incitement to violent extremism;

- Develop gender-sensitive programmes that would facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders or inmates;

- Promote innovative approaches, including digital games and gamified apps as venues for cultural dialogue and conflict management while addressing questions central to building peace in order to create new spaces for dialogue and violence prevention;

- Deploy a diverse group of community/social workers into at-risk communities to foster intra-community dialogue and strengthen relations between governments and community members;

- Design volunteer programmes in which community leaders, from advocacy, public service and cultural groups as well as religious institutions, serve as community counsellors responsible for helping first time migrants connect with affinity groups, locate services and participate in community events;

- Incorporate elderly and hospice care training into deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

Illustrative United Nations Programmatic Support to Member States to foster Dialogue and Conflict Prevention

- **Total Number of Projects:** 28

- **Number of Countries:** Over 50

- **Implementing Agencies:** UN Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence and Conflict, UN Women, UNAOC, UNDP, DPKO, UNIOGBIS, UNESCO, DPA

- **UNESCO:** In Africa, UNESCO completed a project that supported Government efforts in conflict prevention, countering violent extremism and promoting the socio-economic empowerment of youth and to support the building of institutional capacity of national partners through the provision of technical assistance, sensitization programmes, peace education and creating avenues for dialogue among communities.

- **UNAOC/UNDP:** At the global level, UNAOC and UNDP will promote digital games and gamified apps as venues for cultural dialogue and conflict management while addressing questions central to building peace in order to create new spaces for dialogue and violence prevention and providing developers and peacebuilders the chance to showcase their work.

- **UNDP/DPA:** UNDP and DPA are building national capacities for mediation and dialogue, supporting Governments in South and Central America, South East Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Africa.

- **UNAOC:** UNAOC is implementing a global project to foster mutual understanding, trust, cooperation and dialogue between emerging global leaders; engage Fellows in activities and discussions with the focus on issues related to interfaith dialogue and cultural diversity; and interact with a wide range of local actors deeply involved in education initiatives aimed at PVE.

17. Report of the Secretary-General on Protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, A/72/316, para. 5.
18. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 50
19. A/HRC/33/29, para. 21-23.
20. A/70/674, para. 5.
21. A/HRC/33/29, para. 17, (references omitted).

2. Good governance, human rights and the rule of law

The ideologies, actions and goals of violent extremists and terrorists are counter to the principles espoused in the United Nations Charter and enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a corollary, developing and implementing PVE Plans in a manner that ensures respect for these principles demonstrates the universal values and humanity that unify the international community.

As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has stated:

> *"the best prevention tool is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international treaties that derive from it. … A focus on the prevention of human rights violations can contribute directly to preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism by avoiding individual experiences of human rights violations … which have been identified as playing a role in an individual's path to radicalization."* [17]

To avoid feeding the grievances that enhance violent extremism's appeal, respect for human rights for all and the rule of law should be the fundamental basis of any PVE Plan. Such Plans should thus align with national human rights action plans, and be supported by and promote laws and policies that strengthen trust and inclusion between governments and communities, prevent marginalization, and ensure equal access and fair treatment under the law, at all institutional levels, as recommended in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as regional and national development plans.[18]

Policy frameworks such as National and Regional PVE Plans of Action risk inefficiency, possibly bolster negative perceptions of governance and can even be harmful[19], if they do not define the term "violent extremism" in their respective national and regional context. In this regard, the United Nations PVE Plan emphasizes that "[d]efinitions of 'terrorism' and 'violent extremism' are the prerogative of Member States and must be consistent with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law."[20] Guidance is provided by the sectoral definitions of terrorism established in the 19 international protocols and conventions on terrorism.[21]

"Extremism" and "radicalization" — Excerpts from the OHCHR Report on best practices and lessons learned on how protecting and promoting human rights contribute to preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/33/29)

"Extremism"

"**19.** Some domestic laws and policies address the phenomenon of 'extremism' without qualifying it as 'violent'. They define 'extremism' as 'vocal or active opposition' to the values of the respective country or society, including 'democracy, the rule of law,' individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'. Some definitions of 'extremism' refer to notions or aims which are racist, anarchist, nationalist, authoritarian or totalitarian regardless of their political, ideological, religious or philosophic character, and which are contrary, in theory or in practice, to principles of democracy or human rights, to the good functioning of the democratic institutions of the State or to other basic principles of the rule of law. Some laws and policies go further and describe extremism as encompassing non-violent conduct, including conduct deemed to insult national pride or breach national dignity, or knowingly disseminating false accusations against federal or regional officials, such as allegations that they have committed illegal or criminal acts in their official capacity. If they are not limited to 'violent' extremism, such measures risk targeting the holding of an opinion or belief rather than actual conduct." (see references there)

"Radicalization"

"**20.** Another term that is often used is 'radicalization', with a number of States adopting some policy responses to this phenomenon. The notion of 'radicalization' is generally used to convey the idea of a process through which an individual adopts an increasingly extremist set of beliefs and aspirations. This may include, but is not defined by, the willingness to condone, support, facilitate or use violence to further political, ideological, religious or other goals. States and other stakeholders use various definitions for radicalization, frequently limiting the focus to 'violent' radicalization or radicalization leading to terrorism. The European Police Office (Europol) has recently recommended referring to a 'violent extremist social trend' rather than using the term 'radicalization'. However, such vague concepts risk infringing human rights, including article 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Secretary-General, in his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, left the definition of violent extremism to national authorities but cautioned that such definitions must be consistent with States' obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law.' (see references there)

"**61.** Key concepts related to violent extremism should be clearly defined, particularly when they are likely to trigger measures that may interfere with human rights. This is of particular concern where domestic legislation creates criminal offences based on such concepts. There are also risks of human rights violations when the terms "extremism" or "radicalization" are used to cover non-violent activity. States should ensure that the focus of their measures is on actual conduct, rather than mere opinions or beliefs. International human rights law provides a clear framework for the promotion and protection of human rights. In particular, the right to hold an opinion and the freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of one's choice cannot be subject to any restrictions."

According to a study by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),

"[v]iolent extremism has been described as the 'use or support of violence'; the 'willingness' to use violence; committing, advocating or encouraging acts of violence; and "promoting views which foment and incite violence in furtherance of particular beliefs, and foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence'. Violent extremism is generally conceived as being aimed at achieving political, ideological or religious goals, or as the means employed by groups that reject democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Some definitions explicitly note that radical views are by no means a problem in themselves, but that they become a threat to national security when such views are put into violent action. In other cases, definitions employed do not make fully clear whether 'violent extremism' presupposes violent action or inciting violent action, or whether lesser forms of conduct that do not normally trigger criminal law sanctions would also be included." [22]

The same study has also addressed the linkages between international law, in particular international human rights law, and laws and policies that address "radicalization" or

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22. A/HRC/33/29, para. 17, (references omitted).

"extremism" without qualifying it as "violent". The following boxes may be helpful in devising approaches that are fully compliant with international law.

A PVE plan committed to strengthening the rule of law, with appropriate checks and balances, is essential for the legality and legitimacy of any PVE programme, project and policy. Taking these factors into account, strategic PVE approaches to strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law should:

- Employ human rights impact assessments;
- Establish and bolster meaningful oversight through independent mechanisms;
- Integrate regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that ensure programmes and policies achieve stated objectives and redress any negative impact on human rights;
- Meaningfully engage with civil society in monitoring and evaluation;
- Avoid directly or indirectly discriminating, stigmatizing or profiling specific groups or communities based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or other sociocultural affiliations.

United Nations PVE Plan: Recommendations for National and Regional PVE Action Plans to address the drivers of violent extremism in the area of Good Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law

Non-discrimination and equality:

1. Review all national legislation, policies, strategies and practices aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism to ascertain whether they are firmly grounded in respect for human rights and the rule of law, and whether they put in place national mechanisms designed to ensure compliance. This may also involve taking measures to strengthen the rule of law, repealing discriminatory legislation and implementing policies and laws that combat discrimination and exclusion;

Access to justice and institutions:

2. Provide access to justice for all and strengthen fair, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Non-discriminatory basic service provision:

3. Foster non-discriminatory basic service provision, ensure accountability for service delivery, and extend state services to remote areas and create an environment where entrepreneurship can flourish and societies can become more peaceful, just and inclusive;

Economic, social and cultural rights:

4. Promote the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including through human rights-based initiatives that help eliminate the conditions conducive to violent extremism. Such programmes can be particularly helpful when one group, whatever its demographic weight, behaves monopolistically in the political and economic sectors at the expense of other groups;

Prevent the subversion of the work of educational, cultural and religious institutions:

5. Prevent the subversion of the work of educational, cultural and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters, as highlighted in Security Council resolution 1624 (2005); take appropriate measures against all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, as exhibited in particular in the curricula of formal and non-formal educational institutions, and textbooks and teaching methods;

Good Governance, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law

- Reforming legislation and introducing new programmes that are gender sensitive and youth-friendly
- Equality at all levels of institutions and fostering non-discrimantory basic service provision
- Accountability for security forces, law enforcement, and justice institutions, and violators of human rights

Accountability:

6. Strengthen the professionalism of security forces, law enforcement agencies and justice institutions; and ensure effective oversight and accountability of such bodies, in conformity with international human rights law and the rule of law. This may involve providing dedicated human rights training to security forces, law enforcement agents and all those involved in the administration of justice regarding the prohibition of incitement to hatred and, more broadly, respect for human rights within the context of measures taken to counter violent extremism and terrorism;Ensure accountability for gross violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including

UNODC: Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons

The UNODC *Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons* provides practical guidance on key management policies and mechanisms, such as meeting international standards for prison conditions, training staff in human and non-discriminatory treatment and preventing corruption. The Handbook also deals with preventing radicalization to violent extremism in prisons and preparing violent extremist prisoners for reintegration into the community.
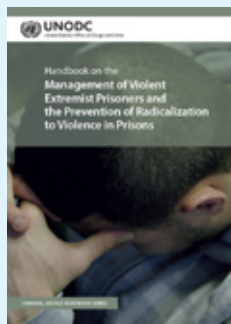
The Handbook stresses that any efforts in prison to address violent extremism must not lead to undermining human rights to which all persons, including violent extremist prisoners, are entitled. However, prison managers should not forget that while both violent extremists and other criminals may employ violence to attain specific goals, most violent extremists are motivated by ideological, religious or political gain and believe that they are fighting for a cause. The focus of this Handbook is on adult male and female violent extremist prisoners, whereas a different legal regime is applicable to children deprived of their liberty. ●

those amounting to crimes under international law, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, through criminal procedures adhering to due-process guarantees. Accountability mechanisms should have relevant gender expertise to fulfil their mandates. In cases where national procedures are not able or are unwilling to address such crimes, the international community should support accountability efforts, including through a referral of such situations by the Security Council to the International Criminal Court or to an ad hoc tribunal, where appropriate;

Freedom of expression:

7. Ensure that any restrictions on freedom of expression are clearly and narrowly defined and meet the three-part test of legality, proportionality and necessity.

Penitentiary systems:

8. Reform national legal frameworks and penitentiary systems to ensure the security of inmates, personnel and facilities and establish procedures to prevent and counter radicalization in prisons based on human rights and the rule of law;

Disengagement, Rehabilitation and Counselling:

9. Introduce disengagement, rehabilitation and counselling programmes for persons engaged in violent extremism which are gender-sensitive and include programmes for children to facilitate their reintegration into society. These programmes must be in full compliance with international human rights norms and standards, including the rights to freedom of movement, freedom of expression and privacy, gender equality and the principle of non-discrimination;

Incitement:

10. Implement Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), promoting a comprehensive approach to incitement and violent extremism, and the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix), involving all relevant actors, such as national human rights institutions, civil society, political parties and the media;

Member States, regional organizations as well as United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes initiated various programmes and activities to strengthen good governance, human rights and the rule of law, as a means of addressing the drivers of violent extremism. ●

Implementation illustrations:

● Ensure that PVE plans focus on actual conduct rather than opinions or beliefs. Adequately conceptualized and transparent PVE programmes can enhance security and more effectively secure human rights by strengthening legitimacy as well as trust and respect for the rule of law.

● Build trust and confidence between law enforcement and communities by training law enforcement in effective community engagement, which includes equipping training facilities to teach adaptive techniques for engagement, consulting civil society in reviewing the rules of engagement, drafting community safety and policing plans, promoting inclusive and representative law enforcement institutions, and organizing multi-stakeholder simulations that improve coordination between local government, police and communities during a crisis or attack.

● Train and build the capacity of law enforcement officials on human rights, the rule of law, gender-sensitivity, and

the prevention of terrorism, which includes dealing with radicalization to violence.

- Strengthen the capacity of the criminal justice system to ensure laws, policies and procedures targeting terrorism and violent extremism comply with human rights norms. In particular, support management of the penitentiary institutions, including prisons, for conduct in line with international standards to avoid radicalization and further radicalization in prisons.

- Set guidelines for conduct, establish procedures for dialogue and provide related training for prison guards and personnel engaged with violent extremist offenders.

- Establish and/or support programmes tailored for the management of violent extremist prisoners and prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons.

- Provide access to mechanisms where individuals and communities can voice grievances and seek resolutions to disputes.

- Provide legal services and aid to vulnerable and marginalized groups as a means to address grievances and ensure equal access to the justice system.

- Improve the capacity and skills of young people and youth organizations to recognize and act against human rights violations.

- Train and build the capacity of journalists to promote new media as platforms for dialogue, to strengthen respect for human rights, especially with young people, to bolster new forms of global citizenship.

Illustrative United Nations Programmatic Support to Member States on Good Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law

- **Total Number of Projects:** 41
- **Number of Countries:** Over 70
- **Implementing Agencies:** UNODC, UNESCO, CTITF/UNCCT, CTED, OHCHR, UNICRI, UNDP
- **UNODC:** At the global level, UNODC is supporting Governments' development of legal and policy frameworks; capacity-building for justice and child protection professionals and the dissemination of the international legal framework.
- **UNOCHR:** OHCHR is conducting a global study to provide analysis of human rights considerations in measures taken to prevent the use of information and communication technology for terrorist purposes to counter violent extremism and the recruitment of foreign fighters.

- **UNODC:** UNODC is building and enhancing capacity in Africa for: investigation, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism offences; human rights compliance in criminal justice responses to terrorism; addressing legal and criminal justice aspects of radicalisation, violent extremism and foreign terrorist fighters; cross-border judicial cooperation; and adopting/revising counter-terrorism legal frameworks.

- **UNCCT/UNODC/CTED:** UNCCT/UNODC and CTED are planning to build the capacity of prison administrations in selected MENA and Asian Member States to effectively manage violent extremist prisoners and prevent radicalization to violence in prisons. This includes initiating and promoting prison-based disengagement programmes aimed at dissuading extremists from violence.

- **UNODC:** UNODC is raising the awareness of Government officials in the MENA region of national and regional good practices and related instruments in preventing violent extremism; enhancing cooperation with, and involvement of community and civil society organizations to address terrorism and violent extremism; and strengthening the national capacities on preventing violent extremism in prisons.

- **OHCHR:** OHCHR completed a compilation report on best practices and lessons learned on how protecting and promoting human rights contributes to preventing and countering violent extremism.

- **UNICRI:** UNICRI is planning to develop four national initiatives (in Africa, South East Asia, and the Middle East) to promote the use of alternative and diversion measures for juveniles (under 18) allegedly involved in terrorist activities, as a benchmark for the establishment of consolidated regional strategies.

- **UNDP:** UNDP will organize consultations with MENA Member States at the federal level on the: anti-terrorism and truth and reconciliation bills; the organization of police-community interactions and the preparation of action plans in select districts on how to address violent extremism; training of lawyers and the bar association on PVE and laws on terrorism; the provision of legal aid to prisoners; and high level advocacy to ensure terrorism cases are tried in civilian courts.

A drawing exercise session at the Sanda Karimi Internal Displaced Persons camp in Madiguri, Borno state, northeast Nigeria.

PHOTO: UNICEF/UN028928/Esiebo

3. Engaging Communities

Establishing a trust-based relationship between communities and authorities, including security forces as well as social and educational institutions, helps build resilience and prevent violence. Oftentimes, PVE initiatives result in more successful outcomes, when authorities have a pre-existing relationship with the community. For example, persistent community engagement can facilitate programme implementation and related service delivery, while also helping avert conflict and deescalate tensions between law enforcement and communities.

PVE plans should foster community engagement and intra-community relations by:

- Encouraging community-wide participation in decision-making on methods and initiatives to prevent the emergence of violent extremism in marginalized communities and bordering communities;

- Creating mechanisms for local communities to work with federal and central authorities to coordinate PVE efforts at all levels of government with adequate funding and balanced implementation;

- Promoting partnerships with civil society to identify and address drivers of violent extremism;

- Establishing and supporting regional and global networks for civil society groups and communities to share best practices and coordinate efforts aimed at reducing the support-basis of violent extremism;

Excerpts of General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 related to engaging communities:

10. Encourages civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to engage, as appropriate, in efforts to enhance the implementation of the Strategy, including through interaction with Member States and the United Nations system, and encourages Member States and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and its entities to enhance engagement with civil society in accordance with their mandates, as appropriate, and to support its role in the implementation of the Strategy;

11. Encourages Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors, where appropriate, in developing tailored strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite recruitment to terrorist groups and the commission of terrorist acts and to address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism;

38. Urges all Member States and the United Nations to unite against violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, encourages the efforts of leaders to discuss within their communities the drivers of violent extremism conducive terrorism and to evolve strategies to address them, and underlines that States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and the media have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and facilitating understanding, inclusive dialogue and respect for religious and cultural diversity and human rights;

Excerpts of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) relating to community engagement:

16. Encourages Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment to this kind of violent extremism and promoting social inclusion and cohesion.

- Developing mentorship programs that focus on one-to-one relationships; and
- Providing social services for victims of sexual and gender based crimes.[24]

Sustainable and effective community outreach requires long-term engagement tailored to the specific contexts and challenges communities face. While Governments are encouraged to mandate requisite training in community engagement, officials and personnel responsible for the management and implementation of community-based PVE programming, such as social workers and police officers, should also take it upon themselves to pursue training that will enhance their cross-cultural communication skills and acculturate them to the unique issues and circumstances in preventing violent extremism faced by the communities they serve. Although a majority of residents may affiliate with a specific group or prevailing views may exist, communities are not monoliths. They host residents with a range of contrasting points-of-view and lifestyles, and officials and personnel must be prepared to harness this diversity and create partnerships with and between a variety of groups and people. ●

United Nations PVE Plan: Recommendations for National and Regional PVE Action Plans to address the drivers of violent extremism in the area of Engaging Communities

Inclusion:

1. Develop joint and participatory strategies, including with civil society and local communities, to prevent the emergence of violent extremism, protect communities from recruitment and the threat of violent extremism, and support confidence-building measures at the community level by providing appropriate platforms for dialogue and the early identification of grievances;
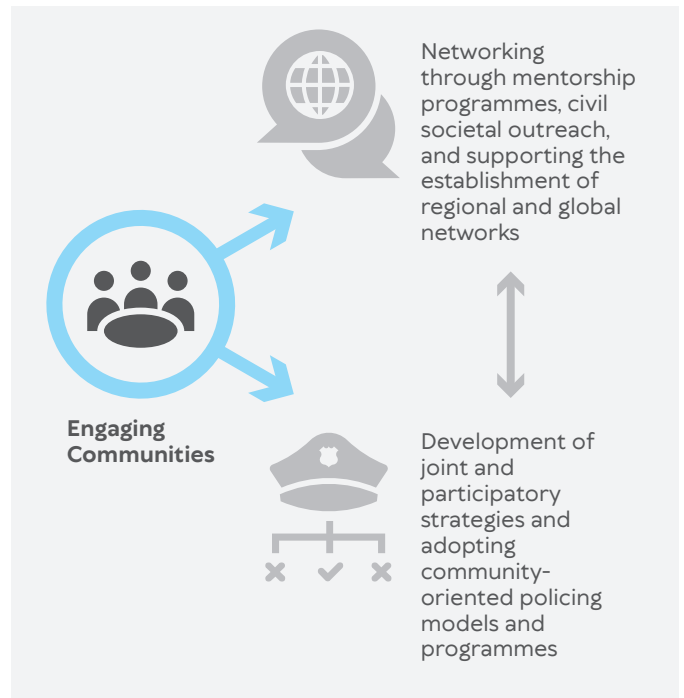
Community-oriented Policing:

2. Adopt community-oriented policing models and programmes that seek to solve local issues in partnership with the community and are firmly based on human rights so as to avoid putting community members at risk. This would increase public awareness and vigilance and improve police understanding and knowledge with regard to communities, thus enhancing their ability to be proactive and identify grievances and critical issues at an early stage;

Medical, Psychosocial and Legal Support:

3. Provide medical, psychosocial and legal service support in communities that give shelter to victims of violent extremists, including victims of sexual and gender-based crimes;

Mentorship:

4. Develop local and family-based mentorship programmes, based on a one-to-one relationship between mentor and mentee, focusing on vulnerable individuals or those who have been convicted of or charged with criminal acts related to violent extremism;

Engaging Communities

Networking through mentorship programmes, civil societal outreach, and supporting the establishment of regional and global networks

Development of joint and participatory strategies and adopting community-oriented policing models and programmes

Cross-Societal Engagement:

5. Encourage civic and professional associations, unions and chambers of commerce to reach out through their own networks to marginalized groups so as to address challenges together through inclusive dialogue and consensual politics;

Regional and Global Exchanges:

6. Support the establishment of regional and global networks for civil society, youth, women's organizations and religious leaders to enable them to share good practices and experience so as to improve work in their respective communities and promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue;

23. A/HRC/33/29, para. 29.

24. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 51; see also International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 3.

Dialogue on Drivers of Violent Extremism:

7. Promote, in partnership with civil society and communities, a discourse that addresses the drivers of violent extremism, including ongoing human rights violations. Address any existing human rights violations, as a matter of both legal obligation and credibility.

Member States, regional organizations as well as United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes initiated various programmes and activities to engage communities, as a means of addressing the drivers of violent extremism.

Implementation illustrations:

- Establish systematic, local prevention networks with experts trained to handle specific cases in communities.
- Identify and expand effective local community-based PVE initiatives to other areas or nation-wide.
- Create training and mentorship programmes that strengthen the resilience of juveniles and their social support systems (e.g. parents, teachers, and social workers) against the outreach campaigns of violent extremists. In particular, programmes should seek to strengthen self-confidence and critical thinking and promote active participation in the community.
- Strengthen the capacity of faith based institutions, including syllabus and curriculum development, to foster inter- and intra-faith relations. Develop peer-education programs in which vulnerable individuals/groups interact with individuals that were previously exposed to or engaged in violent extremism.
- Launch helpline services that support the family and friends of violent extremists.
- Engage youth, women, and civil society in raising awareness of PVE objectives through community-oriented problem solving.
- Assist law enforcement agencies in strengthening and developing an effective and comprehensive strategy to engage at-risk communities.
- Strengthen policies and establish programmes to promote inclusion and the rights of disadvantaged groups at the city/municipality level, while fostering the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on inclusive and safer cities.
- Detect and investigate hate crimes, and support the victims and communities targeted for hate crimes.

Illustrative United Nations Programmatic Support to Member States on Engaging Communities

- **Total Number of Projects:** 18
- **Number of Countries:** Over 15
- **Implementing Agencies:** DPKO, UNESCO, UNICRI, CTED, UNCCT, UNDP, UNODC
- **DPKO:** At the national level in Africa, DPKO is planning to involve police, communities, youth, women, civil society and others in raising awareness and prevention of violent extremism through community oriented problem solving.
- **UNICRI:** UNICRI will support MENA national law enforcement agencies in strengthening and developing an effective and comprehensive strategy to engage with communities identified at the local level as high risk for radicalization, recruitment and foreign terrorist fighters return.
- **UNESCO:** UNESCO is implementing an indicators framework in Eastern Africa to assess good practices at the city level that will be further developed and pilot-tested in selected cities in partnership with regional organizations.
- **UNCCT/DPKO:** UNCCT and DPKO will contribute to stability and sustaining peace at the community level in North Africa and the Sahel by introducing the practice of Community-Oriented Policing to local actors. This will encourage lasting partnerships between police officers working at the community level and the communities they serve, inspire local policing initiatives in support of counter-terrorism operations and efforts to prevent violent extremism that are respectful of human rights and sensitive to concerns of community members.
- **OHCHR:** OHCHR is leading a project of the CTITF Working Group on promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism on 'human rights-compliant responses to the threat posed by foreign fighters'.

4. Empowering Youth

Young people are among the best allies in preventing violent extremism. Young people are often better equipped and more willing than their elders to communicate across cultures and find new, innovative ways to break down social barriers using communication technology. At the same time, many young people experience a sense of disenfranchisement and marginalization, which may leave them vulnerable to violent extremism. Taking into account both the influence and vulnerability of youth in the prevention of violent

extremism, it is imperative that PVE plans include measures that not only engage young people, but also empower them as equal partners in engendering constructive change. Globally, today's youth population is the largest in history and the majorities they represent in many nations enables them to amplify messages of common humanity. Therefore, incorporating young voices in dialogue, decision-making, implementation and PVE capacity-building initiatives, governmental and non-governmental, is critical to the success of PVE plans.

Several United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions highlight the important roles of youth in preventing violent extremism, particularly General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 and Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security. PVE Plans should align with these resolutions to ensure that young leaders, youth networks and youth groups are included in all stages of PVE plan development and implementation. They should be:

- Enabled to participate in decision-making processes at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions, and in mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict,
- Provided with opportunities to contribute constructively in building their communities,
- Enabled to advocate pluralism and mutual respect,
- Encouraged to participate in inter-generational dialogue

Excerpts of General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 related to youth:

Noting the important and positive contribution of youth in efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism, as well as for the promotion of peace and security, and in this regard expressing concern about the danger of recruitment and radicalization to terrorism, including in prisons,"

13. Encourages Member States, United Nations entities, regional and subregional organizations and relevant actors to consider instituting mechanisms to involve youth in the promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural and interreligious dialogue and develop, as appropriate, an understanding of respect for human dignity, pluralism and diversity, including, as appropriate, through education programmes, that could discourage their participation in acts of terrorism, violent extremism conducive to terrorism, violence, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination, also encourages Member States to empower youth through the promotion of media and information literacy by including youth in decision-making processes and considering practical ways to include youth in the development of relevant programmes and initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and urges Member States to take effective measures, in conformity with international law, to protect young people affected or exploited by terrorism or violent extremism conducive to terrorism;"

Excerpts of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security:

Noting the important role youth can play further as positive role models in preventing and countering violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, and fuels conflict, inhibits socioeconomic development and fosters regional and international insecurity,"

16. Urges Member States to consider ways to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict, including institutions and mechanisms to counter violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, and, as appropriate, to consider establishing integrated mechanisms for meaningful participation of youth in peace processes and dispute-resolution;"

Crown Prince Al Hussein Bin Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan addresses the Council's open debate on the theme "The role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace".

between community actors and national leaders, including families, religious, cultural and education leaders, teachers, practitioners, to promote social cohesion and inclusion, and

- Supported in organizing programs that nurture their idealism, creativity and energy in places and settings that commonly attract youth members of society.[25]

The most effective youth programmes have shown to be peer-driven and aimed at developing life skills, such as conflict management, teamwork, tolerance and empathy.[26] Nurturing such life skills can have a cross-cutting effect, and in time, bolster more targeted programming designed to enhance political, ethnic, social and religious tolerance; cultural diversity and gender equality; as well as knowledge of democratic values and human rights. An OHCHR study on protecting and promoting human rights in PVE noted the impact of introducing targeting into youth programming, stating that:

> "while online and offline 'counter-narrative' campaigns aimed at reaching a large group of young people may be 'of great value as means of general education, designed to raise the population's awareness and building a resilient society', direct engagement in small groups has shown the highest effectiveness, in particular with youth at imminent risk of joining violent extremist groups." [27]

The development and implementation of youth initiatives in PVE plans should:

- Support the voluntary participation of youth;
- Include commitments to implement UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015);
- Avoid racial or religious profiling and discrimination when designing programmes;
- Promote the development of policies for youth that contribute to peacebuilding efforts, including social, cultural and economic development;
- Include all youth instead of focusing solely on youth deemed "at-risk" for radicalization by government authorities or implementing organizations;
- Identify instances in which generalized programming, such as education on tolerance, can be refined to address local circumstances, contexts and drivers;
- Promote youth ownership in community-building;
- Harness the technological skills of youth and reflect modern modalities of communication in programme designs.
- Equip young people with the necessary knowledge, and media and information literacy skills to expand their social choices, build new forms of global citizenship, and become more resilient to manipulation when using Internet and social media.

United Nations PVE Plan: Recommendations for National and Regional PVE Action Plans to address the drivers of violent extremism in the area of Empowering Youth

Participation:

1. Support and enhance young women's and young men's participation in activities aimed at preventing violent extremism by prioritizing meaningful engagement mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels, as laid out in the 2015 Amman Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security; and provide a physically, socially and emotionally safe and supportive environment for the participation of young women and men in preventing violent extremism;

Integration:

2. Integrate young women and men into decision-making processes at local and national levels, including by establishing youth councils and similar mechanisms which give young women and men a platform for participating in mainstream political discourse;

25. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 52; see also International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 4.

26. A/HRC/33/29, para. 43 (see references there).

27. See Harald Weilnböck, "Confronting the counter-narrative ideology. Embedded face-to-face prevention—and youth (media) work" (Cultures Interactive, 2015), available from http://cultures-interactive.de/fachartikel.html; A/HRC/33/29, para. 44 (see references there).

Outreach:

3. Involve hard-to-reach young women and men, such as those from underrepresented groups, in efforts to prevent violent extremism, as laid out in the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding;

Mentoring:

4. Establish national mentoring programmes for young women and men, create space for personal growth in their chosen fields, and offer opportunities for community service which can enable them to become leaders and actors for constructive change;

Involving hard-to-reach youth, establishing mentoring programmes and integrating youth into decision making processes

International dialogue and programming specific to youth-adult confidence building and idea development

Empowered Youth

Dialogue:

5. Foster trust between decision makers and young women and men, especially through intergenerational dialogue and youth-adult confidence-building activities and training;

Funding:

6. Ensure that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to projects that address young people's specific needs or empower them and encourage international financial institutions, foundations and other donors to provide small grant funding mechanisms to women and young social entrepreneurs to enable them to develop their own ideas on strengthening community resilience against violent extremism.

Member States, regional organizations as well as United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes have initiated various programmes and activities to empower youth, as a means of addressing the drivers of violent extremism.

Implementation illustrations:

- Introduce media and communications technology literacy in all stages of education, in national and regional curricula as an element of across-the-board competency.

- Develop participatory youth public policies and participation mechanisms.

- Create opportunities, such as ad hoc events and debates and standing institutional mechanisms such as youth councils or boards, for young people to engage in dialogue with decision-makers at all levels on PVE topics.

- Develop opportunities for young people to engage in social and economic activities while still in school, such as promoting internship and job shadowing opportunities, developing mentorship programs, enhancing career guidance and counselling in schools and universities, and increasing volunteer opportunities and summer programmes.

- Establish Youth Solidarity Funds, including small granting schemes, to assist young people in contributing, creating, and leading community-based, local, or grassroots PVE initiatives, which utilize and nurture their knowledge and ability to innovate.

- Support transnational and regional youth networks that create an enabling environment for young women and men to develop their competencies, exercise their rights and civic duties, and enhance their access to the labour market.

Illustrative United Nations Programmatic Support to Member States on Empowering Youth

- **Total Number of Projects:** 27
- **Number of Countries:** Over 30
- **Implementing Agencies:** UNAOC, UNESCO, UNCCT, UNDP
- **UNAOC:** UNAOC is using the Youth Solidarity Fund to recognize young people's knowledge and ability to contribute to local, grassroots preventive actions in their communities. The Youth Solidarity Fund supports these initiatives through grants.
- **UNESCO:** In 2000, UNESCO launched and is continuing the "Making Room: Education and Culture of Peace Program" in the Americas based on the premise of opening public schools in high risk areas during the weekends when violence rates involving youth increased significantly.
- **UNESCO/UNCCT:** UNESCO and UNCCT are planning to empower young women and men in the MENA region with the knowledge, values and capacity to communicate on- and offline, while enabling them to become resilient to radicalization and violent extremism, including through

Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake of Sri Lanka was appointed on 20 June 2017 by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as his Envoy on Youth. The Success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development depends on empowering young people as rights-holders, agents of change and torchbearers.

PHOTO: UN Photo/Manuel Elias

supporting the mainstreaming of PVE related issues in the education sector.

- **UNESCO:** In Asia, UNESCO together with Sportsimpact, is organizing 13 one-week workshops on 'Guide to Organize a Sport Event'. The lessons learned from this pilot project, which uses sports to promote social inclusion and empower the youth through skills workshops and positive values, will be the basis of continued work with South-East Asian national authorities on operationalizing the principles of Berlin Declaration on Inclusive Sport and Physical Education.

- **UNESCO:** At the regional level in Africa, UNESCO is conducting policy and institutional support by means of the development of the strategic guidelines on Global Citizenship Education and Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education.

- **UNDP:** UNDP is increasing youth employment in a MENA Member State by creating jobs for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to prevent them from being sensitive to the message of violent extremists and supporting job creation to offer youth an alternative to recruitment by violent extremist groups.

- **UNESCO:** The project Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth), funded by the European Union engages youth in addressing factors that lead to violent extremism. It promotes inter-regional dialogue and empowers young women and men to lead initiatives related to the development of youth policies, employment policies and obtaining fair youth representation in the media.

> *"Denying the rights of women and girls is not only wrong in itself; it has a serious social and economic impact that holds us all back. Gender equality has a transformative effect that is essential to fully functioning communities, societies and economies."*

—Secretary-General António Guterres

Secretary-General's Message for International Women's Day from 6 March 2017

PHOTO: United Nations/UNTV

5. Gender Equality and Empowering Women

Numerous United Nations resolutions and reports have highlighted the importance of integrating a gender perspective and promoting women's participation, leadership, and empowerment in PVE. These mandates are supported by decades of research that demonstrates the critical role women play in enhancing the efficacy and long-term sustainability of conflict prevention and resolution processes. At all levels, women are already playing important roles in PVE that deserve recognition and support. Additionally, the Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 found that, across regions, every advance made by violent extremist groups involved attacks on the rights of women and girls, including their rights to education, public life and decision-making over their bodies.[28] While women are often disproportionately impacted by this violence, it should be noted that women have also been perpetrators or supporters of violent extremism in many different contexts. Violent extremist groups have strategically manipulated and exploited gender norms and stereotypes to advance their objectives. PVE plans should give recognition to the broad spectrum of roles women have played in preventing, supporting, and as victims of violent extremism and promote their participation, leadership, and the inclusion of their perspectives as a core priority.

In fact, societies are less prone to violent extremism when they respect women's rights. Addressing context-specific gender dynamics, including any gendered differences in the drivers and impact of violent extremism, represents an essential component in developing and implementing effective and holistic PVE plans.

PVE plans should foster gender equality and empower women by:

- Including a thorough gender analysis in assessing the drivers and impact of radicalization and violent extremism that leads to terrorism;

- Recognizing the broad range of roles women play in preventing, supporting, and as victims of violent extremism and mainstream gender throughout;

- Addressing the concepts of masculinity and femininity, gender norms, and stereotypes that are exploited by violent extremists;

- Supporting women's leadership and participation including in such areas as government, security and civil society with specific commitments for doing so;

- Ensuring that women's rights are not encroached upon in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism;

- Creating a safe environment that protects against and pursues accountability for sexual and gender-based violence and violations perpetrated by violent extremists;

- Aligning commitments in PVE plans with those in any national or regional action plans on women, peace, and security;

- Working to promote gender equality in all communities regardless of social, cultural or religious factors; and

- Facilitating information exchange on the integration of gender perspectives as well as women, peace and security perspectives into PVE policies and programming at all levels.[29]

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28. Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace - A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, Chapter 9 on Countering Violent Extremism While Respecting the Rights and Autonomy of Women and their Communities.

29. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 53; see also International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 4.

United Nations PVE Plan: Recommendations for National and Regional PVE Action Plans to address the drivers of violent extremism in the area of Gender Equality and Empowering Women

Capacity-Building

1. Build the capacity of women and their civil society groups to engage in prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism;

Funding

2. Ensure that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to projects that address women's specific needs or empower women, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on women and peace and security (S/2015/716).

Mainstreaming

3. Mainstream gender perspectives across efforts to prevent violent extremism;

Capacity Building

- Building capacity for women and their civil society groups
- Ensuring funds to address violent extremism that address womens' specific needs

Awareness

- Mainstream gender perspectives
- Invest in gender-sensitive research
- Include women and other underrepresented groups in law enforcement / security

Gender Equality and Empowering Women
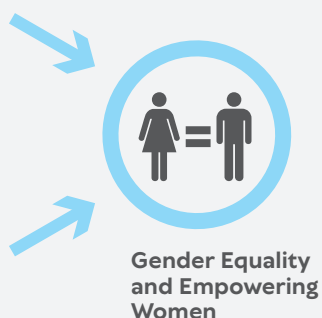
Research

4. Invest in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women's roles in violent extremism, including on identifying the drivers that lead women to join violent extremist groups, and on the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on their lives, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses;

Inclusion

5. Include women and other underrepresented groups in national law enforcement and security agencies, including

Excerpts of General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 related to women:

Noting the important contribution of women to the implementation of the Strategy, and encouraging Member States, United Nations entities and international, regional and subregional organizations to ensure the participation and leadership of women in efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism,

12. Calls upon all Member States, given the complex global security context today, to highlight the important role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and urges Member States and United Nations entities to integrate a gender analysis on the drivers of radicalization of women to terrorism into their relevant programmes, to consider, when appropriate, the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations and to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism; ●

as part of counter-terrorism prevention and response frameworks;

Member States, regional organizations as well as United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes initiated various programmes and activities to promote gender equality and empower women, as a means of addressing the drivers of violent extremism. ●

Implementation illustrations:

- Integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue in activities to prevent violent extremism and ensure alignment with commitments in national or regional action plans on women, peace, and security.

- Design PVE approaches that address the concepts of masculinity and femininity and gender norms and stereotypes exploited by violent extremists.

- Avoid grouping women and youth together and make children under 18 an independent focus of initiatives.

- Make investments to increase gender parity and women's advancement in political, social, and economic spheres including in the law enforcement sector.

- Develop gender-sensitive rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that address the unique needs of women

UN WOMEN: Key recommendations of the Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325

1. Protect women's and girls' rights at all times and ensure that efforts to counter violent extremism strategies do not stereotype or instrumentalize women and girls.

2. Allow local women autonomy and leadership in determining their priorities and strategies in CVE.

3. Invest in research and data on women's roles in terrorism, such as identifying the drivers that lead to their radicalization and involvement with terrorist groups and the impacts of counterterrorism strategies on their lives.

4. Ensure gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation of all counter-terrorism and CVE interventions. This should specifically address the impact on women and girls, including through use of gender-related indicators and collection of sex-disaggregated data.

- Convene key stakeholders in the development and implementation of PVE plans and national and regional action plans on women, peace, and security to evaluate areas of overlap and promote alignment.

Illustrative United Nations Programmatic Support to Member States on Gender Equality and Empowering Women

- **Total Number of Projects:** 22
- **Number of Countries:** Over 20
- **Implementing Agencies:** UNESCO, OHCHR, UN Women, CTED, UNDP
- **UNDP:** UNDP will examine the role of women in violent extremist groups in Africa and their role in preventing and countering violent extremism work.
- **OHCHR/UN Women:** OHCHR and UN Women are addressing the gap in global data and analysis on effective integration of a gender perspective into policies and programming to countering terrorism and violent extremism and develop a guide that documents good practices and lessons learned to support the integration of a comprehensive gender perspective.
- **UN Women/UNODC:** UN Women and UNODC are planning a programme that will strengthen the role of

and girls, particularly victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

- Provide support to women and girls, as community and family leaders, to detect and deter radicalization as well as develop and deliver alternative narratives in the context of terrorist propaganda, if they so choose.
- Establish a consultative forum for women's civil society groups to inform the development and implementation of PVE plans.
- Increase funding for programmes to enhance women's leadership politically, economically and socially, including support to women's civil society groups working to advance PVE objectives.
- Invest in both quantitative and qualitative research assessments to document women's roles in PVE and any gendered differences in drivers of radicalization and violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

30. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 54.

The Security Council unanimously adopts resolution 2242 (2015), calling on Member States to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's groups in all CVE strategies.

women in the Sahel as community and family leaders to deter radicalization and provide a counter-narrative against violent extremism. The programme will also strengthen the capacities of women's groups to integrate gender into the design and implementation of security policy.

- **UN Women:** UN Women are conducting research in three Central Asian and Eastern European countries to determine the effect of terrorism and violent extremism on women and how they can be more effectively engaged in prevention, response and rehabilitation efforts.

- **OHCHR:** OHCHR is compiling a report to provide policy guidance on the protection of women's rights in the context of state responses to violent extremism.

- **UNESCO:** UNESCO has and will continue to engage in advocacy to highlight the need for a gender-based analysis of radicalization and violent extremism especially focusing on girls' education as an effective tool to prevent violent extremism.

- **UNESCO:** UNESCO, together with UNWOMEN and UNFPA, will ensure capacity building for women in peace building in the Great Lakes region, empowering them to avoid and educate their own children, particularly girls, against becoming involved as sympathizers of perpetrators of violent extremism and becoming involved in such activities themselves. ●

6. Education, Skills Development and Employment Facilitation

Globally, secondary and tertiary enrolment rates have steadily increased over the last 40 years, placing greater responsibility on educational, training and vocational institutions to help current and future generations become productive members of their societies. Shifting job markets, social pressures and violent extremist propaganda create a challenging environment for setting standards, crafting curriculum and imparting the skills and knowledge development that people require to avoid radicalization to violence and speak out against violent extremism.

Imparting the skills and knowledge development to help people overcome these challenges requires promulgating adaptive approaches to education and vocational training in PVE plans. In particular, school curricula should move beyond rote learning and classical teaching methods, and instead, emphasize critical thinking and social and emotional skills that promote tolerance and provide learning that reflects the drivers faced outside the classroom. Along the same lines, vocational training should follow shifts in the job market more closely and modify curricula and skill-building exercises to match students with jobs that they find meaningful. Without providing students with a realistic understanding of the job market and workplace, vocational training may create expectations that cannot be met and contribute to the frustration that fuels the drivers of violent extremism.

Excerpt of General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 related to education, skills development and employment facilitation:

Affirming the importance of education as a tool to help to prevent terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and welcoming the engagement of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with Member States to implement strategies to prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism through education;

Besides the overall goal to provide equal access to inclusive quality education along the lines of education for inclusion, peace and sustainable development, PVE plans should promote vocational training, skills development and employment facilitation by:

- Providing vocational training and skills development opportunities to individuals that are already a part of and youth entering into the labour force;

- Building on the United Nations Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth;

- Ensuring that education includes teaching respect for human rights and diversity, critical thinking, media and digital literacy, as well as behavioural and socioemotional development;

- Creating opportunities within the private sector for young people to make a meaningful contribution to their societies;

- Promoting global citizenship and civic participation by introducing corresponding initiatives into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula and utilizing online and mobile platforms to promulgate educational content on these concepts.[30]

United Nations PVE Plan: Recommendations for National and Regional PVE Action Plans to address the drivers of violent extremism in the area of Education, Skills Development and Employment Facilitation

Access to inclusive, quality education:

1. Invest in education, in particular early childhood education, from ages 3 to 8, to ensure that all children have access to inclusive, high-quality education, taking into account diverse social and cultural settings;

Creating socio-economic opportunities:

2. Collaborate with local authorities to create social and economic opportunities, in both rural and urban locations; invest in equipping people with the skills needed to meet local labour demands through relevant education opportunities;

Vocational education:

3. Provide comprehensive primary through tertiary education, including technical and vocational education, and mentoring for all vulnerable people, including the displaced, by leveraging online and mobile technology;
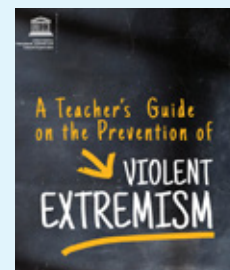
UNESCO: Preventing Violent Extremism through education: A Guide for Policy-Makers

As teachers represent the education system's "frontline" in preventing violent extremism (PVE), it is critical that they receive the appropriate guidance, training and resources to successfully educate and empower students. For teachers, achieving this objective requires a strong policy, administrative and financial framework from which they can draw support. UNESCO's *Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide for policy-makers* functions as a supplement to the organization's *Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism*. At heart, the Guide for policy-makers is tool to help policymakers and administrators develop safe and inclusive educational environments that nurture learners' resilience, and their ability to engage responsibly in society. ●

Soft skills, critical thinking and digital literacy:

4. Implement education programmes that promote "global citizenship", soft skills, critical thinking and digital literacy, and explore means of introducing civic education into school curricula, textbooks and teaching materials. Build the capacity of teachers and educators to support this agenda;

Entrepreneurship:

5. Provide young people with additional career options by fostering an entrepreneurial culture and offering entrepreneurship education, facilitating employment searches and job-matching, enacting regulations to promote the development of micro and small enterprises, easing access to finance and microcredit and increasing the range of support services such as marketing and distribution, so as to unleash the full economic potential of youth;

Private sector engagement:

6. Invite the private sector and other civil society actors to contribute to post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction efforts, especially job creation, facilitation and training opportunities.

UNESCO: A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism

UNESCO's A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism provides practical advice for teachers on detecting and discussing the drivers of violent extremism, and creating inclusive classrooms in which respectful dialogue and critical thinking are nurtured. Differentiating between "push factors" that drive youth to violent extremism, such as marginalization and socioeconomic grievances, and "pull factors" that nurture the appeal of violent extremism, such as public service programmes offered by extremist groups, are some of the tools given to teachers for detecting thought patterns or behavior conducive to radicalization. The guide also highlights "early warning signs," such as sudden breaks with family and friends, increasing antisocial behavior or regular viewing of extremist social media sites, so that teachers have reference points for developing responses on their own or with the help of administrators. ●

Key dimensions of effective responses to violent extremism

INCLUSION — RESILIENCE — PARTNERSHIP — PROCEDURES — SAFETY & WELL-BEING

United Nations Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth:

The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth is a unique collaboration and partnership platform that unites efforts to tackle the youth employment challenge and assist Member States in targeting and delivering on a crucial goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Over 73 million young women and men worldwide are looking for a job, and more than one-third of those working in developing economies lives on less than US$2 a day. The youth employment challenge is therefore an issue of providing both quantity and quality jobs, with important nuances across regions. Investments to support young people in the labour market have increased worldwide, since the most recent economic crisis. Yet, there is still limited coordination and insufficient scale to address the full dimension of the youth employment challenge. To enhance harmonization and collaboration and to scale-up investments and impact, the Global Initiative acts as the catalyst for global, coordinated action. This strong focus on action is intertwined with three key elements: a multi-stakeholder alliance, a knowledge platform and resources. To stimulate country-level action, scale up existing efforts and increase impact, the Initiative focuses on interventions that are locally owned,

ensure clear coherence with national development priorities, and rely on rigorous evidence of what works in different settings. These interventions are concrete and focus on the following multi-sectorial areas:

● Green jobs for youth in collaboration with the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE);

● Quality apprenticeships in collaboration, inter alia, with the Global Apprenticeships Network (GAN);

● Digital skills and "tech-hubs" to improve decent job opportunities for youth in the digital economy;

● Youth in fragile states;

● Youth in the informal economy, promoting an integrated strategy for young peoples' transition to the formal economy in synergy with the current urbanization issue-based process initiated by HLCP/CEB in support of Habitat III;

● Youth in the rural economy;

● Linkages to global markets and investments to improve opportunities for young entrepreneurs, also with the Youth and Trade Initiative;

● Transition to decent work for young workers (15-17) in hazardous occupations.

The Action relies on the commitment of national and regional institutions and the support of United Nations Country Teams to fully engage a diverse set of local partners, drawing from the rich and varied composition of the Initiative's multi-stakeholder alliance. ●

Education, Skills Development, and Employment Facilitation

Investment

Global Citizens

Implement Global Education Programming

Invest in early education for children

Networking

Provide youth with career options and engagement with the private sector

Member States, regional organizations as well as United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes initiated various programmes and activities supporting education, skills development and employment facilitation, as a means of addressing the drivers of violent extremism. ●

Implementation illustrations:

- Provide capacity-building support to public and private sector-led technical and vocational training institutes to strengthen their management and expand their reach to help young people to enhance basic skills such as communication, teamwork and professionalism and to acquire marketable skills and job placements.

- Develop and launch Web-based Youth Platforms to enhance employability and facilitate employment through career and job matching.

- Expand soft skills and provide technical and vocational training to juveniles in prisons to help them transition back into society, as productive and responsible citizens.

- Support post-graduation internships and apprenticeships, particularly in the private sector.

- Work with the private sector and civil society organizations to develop employment programs that provide meaningful and decent job opportunities in communities with marginalized populations, at risk of turning to violent extremism.

- Increase economic opportunities and create an enabling environment for business to develop and grow in communities with marginalized populations, including reducing barriers to starting businesses and increasing access to financial and technical resources needed to grow micro-, small- and medium-enterprises.

- Invest in and support non-formal education exchange programs between high schools, universities, civil society organizations and other community groups that build cultural learning and tolerance, practically.

- Support training on and capacity-building for organizing public debates on issues that can lead to violent extremism.

- Incorporate mock parliaments, courts or advocacy projects into school curricula or afterschool programming.

- Mandate periodic training, on human rights and preventing and countering hate speech, for ombudspersons, parliamentarians and other decision-makers.

- Fund and encourage participation in art and sports programmes in primary schools, such as training in musical instruments or theatre training, to encourage creative and peaceful ways of expressing tensions and unresolved personal challenges.

- Establish public service requirements into secondary and tertiary curricula, and facilitate cooperation between schools and civil society groups in recruiting students for local public service projects, such as environmental programmes or elderly care.

- Build the capacity of teachers adopt the PVE methods recommended in UNESCO's Teacher's Guide on the prevention of violent extremism.

Illustrative United Nations Programmatic Support to Member States on Education, Skills Development and Employment Facilitation

- **Total Number of Projects:** 31
- **Number of Countries:** Over 25
- **Implementing Agencies:** UNAOC, UNCCT, UNDP, UNESCO
- **UNCCT:** UNCCT is planning to expand soft skills, technical and vocational training to juvenile sections in select South Asian prisons in order to help the transition of incarcerated children back into society as productive and responsible citizens.

- **UNESCO:** UNESCO completed a global project that provided practical tips and advice to teachers at the upper primary/lower secondary level on managing classroom discussions in relation to preventing violent extremism and radicalization (supporting learning outcomes that help build resilience to violent extremism).

- **UNESCO:** UNESCO is continuing to build global capacities on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and PVE-E in response to the needs expressed by UNESCO Member States for enhanced capacity-building on PVE-E in the coming year.

- **UNESCO:** UNESCO is implementing a project to strengthen skills development of youth and women for their socio-economic empowerment and integration in Africa through supporting the formation and implementation of inclusive public policies and integrating learner-centered active pedagogical methods.

- **UNDP:** UNDP is planning a project in the MENA region that aims to promote social cohesion and reduce the potential of violence and radicalization among youth through an integrated approach combining sport, dialogue, and employment generation initiatives. This will include an analytical study of the drivers and dynamics of radicalization; support civil society initiatives to promote tolerance, peace and democratic values

7. Strategic communications, the Internet and Social Media

The Internet and digital technologies can be used for both positive and harmful ends. They offer innovative tools for sharing and collecting information, expressing opinions as well as fostering democratic participation. Unfortunately, these tools are also abused by violent extremist groups to recruit followers. Through both physical and Internet-based social networks, violent extremists prey on young peoples' desire for adventure and purpose to manipulate them into joining their ranks. Instead of creating opportunities for young people to bond over positive experiences, the Internet and digital technologies can be used as tools for enabling negative discussions and hateful narratives over real and perceived grievances.

While countering and refuting false narratives may be useful in some contexts, it is also imperative to reinvigorate compelling alternative visions and positive narratives that can help dissuade frustrated people from following violent extremists. Thus, PVE Plans of Action should:

- Utilize strategic communications, the Internet and social media to promote positive narratives that advance the values of tolerance, pluralism and understanding that are based on empirical evidence, locally driven and suited for the target audiences. Media and communication tools that are tailored to local contexts and gender sensitive can counter the destructive propaganda of violent extremists, while protecting freedom of opinion, expression, pluralism and the media;[31]

Excerpts of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) relating to technology, communications and resources:

"**17.** [...] *urges* Member States, in this context, to act cooperatively when taking national measures to prevent terrorists from exploiting technology, communications and resources, including audio and video, to incite support for terrorist acts, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in compliance with other obligations under international law"

- Identify and address key radicalising factors within society in order to develop resonant and influential strategic communications action plans;

- Deconstruct negative stereotypes by presenting, on a constant basis, alternative narratives and successful stories around those who are most often the targets of hate speech, hate crime or violent extremism;

- Clearly set out the legal basis, criteria and guidance on when, how and to what extent online content is blocked, filtered or removed; and review laws, policies and practices with regard to surveillance, interception, collection and retention of personal data in order to ensure full conformity with international human rights law.[32]

- Develop programmes to advance media and information literacy skills, especially for young people, starting in education curricula, including in non-formal settings, to deepen critical thinking on the use of new technologies, as well as respect for human rights, dialogue and tolerance.

United Nations PVE Plan: Recommendations for National and Regional PVE Action Plans to address the drivers of violent extremism in the area of Strategic Communications, the Internet and Social Media

Human Rights Protection:

1. Ensure that national legal frameworks protect freedom of opinion and expression, pluralism, and diversity of the media;

2. Protect journalists, who play a crucial role in democratic societies, by ensuring the prompt and thorough investigation of threats to their safety, and encourage journalists to work together to voluntarily develop media training and industry codes of conduct which foster tolerance and respect.

National Communications Strategies:

3. Develop and implement national communications strategies, in close cooperation with social media companies and the private sector, that are tailored to local contexts, gender sensitive and based on international human rights standards, to challenge the narratives associated with violent extremism;

31. UN PVE Plan of Action, A/70/674, para. 55; see also International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 12 Principles for National Action Planning, No. 12.

32. A/HRC/33/29, para. 65, see also A/HRC/27/37.

Excerpts of General Assembly resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016 related to strategic communications, the internet and social media:

Taking note of the request by the Security Council to the Counter-Terrorism Committee to present a proposal to the Council by 30 April 2017 for a comprehensive international framework, with recommended guidelines and good practices to effectively counter, in compliance with international law, the ways that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities use their narratives to encourage, motivate and recruit others to commit terrorist acts, including with a counter-narrative campaign, consistent with any similar campaign undertaken by the United Nations, as well as options for coordinating the implementation of the framework and mobilizing resources as necessary,

11. Encourages Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors, where appropriate, in developing tailored strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite recruitment to terrorist groups and the commission of terrorist acts and to address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism;

20. Calls upon States, while countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, to review their procedures, practices and legislation regarding the surveillance of communications, their interception and the collection of personal data, including mass surveillance, interception and collection, with a view to upholding the right to privacy, as set out in article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, by ensuring the full and effective implementation of all their obligations under international human rights law;

35. Encourages Member States to consider better ways to cooperate to exchange information, assist each other, prosecute those who use information and communications technologies for terrorist purposes and implement other appropriate cooperative measures to address such threats;

42. Expresses its concern at the increasing use, in a globalized society, by terrorists and their supporters, of information and communications technologies, in particular the Internet and other media, and the use of such technologies to commit, incite, recruit for, fund or plan terrorist acts, notes the importance of cooperation among stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategy, including among Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector and civil society, to address this issue, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and complying with international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter, and reiterates that such technologies can be powerful tools in countering the spread of terrorism, including by promoting tolerance and dialogue among peoples and peace;

43. Stresses that it is essential to address the threat posed by narratives used by terrorists and that, in this regard, the international community should consider developing an accurate understanding of how terrorists motivate others to commit terrorist acts or recruit them, and develop the most effective means to counter terrorist propaganda, incitement and recruitment, including through the Internet, in compliance with international law, including international human rights law;

54. Notes that terrorists may craft distorted narratives that are based on the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of religion to justify violence, which are utilized to recruit supporters and foreign terrorist fighters, mobilize resources and garner support from sympathizers, in particular by exploiting information and communications technologies, including through the Internet and social media, and further notes in this regard the urgent need for the international community to globally counter such activities;

66. Encourages that it is essential to address the threat posed by narratives used by terrorists and that, in this regard, the international community should consider developing an accurate understanding of how terrorists motivate others to commit terrorist acts or recruit them, and develop the most effective means to counter terrorist propaganda, incitement and recruitment, including through the Internet, in compliance with international law, including international human rights law;

Excerpts of Security Council resolution 2354 (2017) relating to the "Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives" (S/2017/375):

"**2.** Stresses that Member States and all relevant United Nations entities should follow the subsequent guidelines while implementing the Comprehensive International Framework:

a. United Nations action in the field of countering terrorist narratives should be based on the United Nations Charter, including the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States;

b. Member States have the primary responsibility in countering terrorist acts and violent extremism conducive to terrorism;

c. Relevant United Nations entities should ensure greater coordination and coherence with donors and recipients of counter-terrorism capacity-building, taking into account national perspectives, and with a view to strengthening national ownership;

d. To be more effective, counter-narrative measures and programs should be tailored to the specific circumstances of different contexts on all levels;

e. All measures taken by Member States to counter terrorism, including to counter terrorist narratives, must comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law;

f. Efforts to counter terrorist narratives can benefit through engagement with a wide range of actors, including youth, families, women, religious, cultural, and education leaders, and other concerned groups of civil society;

g. States should consider supporting the efforts aimed at raising public awareness regarding counter terrorist narratives through education and media, including through dedicated educational programs to pre-empt youth acceptance of terrorist narratives;

h. The importance of promoting enhanced dialogue and broadened understanding among societies;

i. States should consider engaging, where appropriate, with religious authorities and community leaders, that have relevant expertise in crafting and delivering effective counter-narratives, in countering narratives used by terrorists and their supporters;

j. Counter-narratives should aim not only to rebut terrorists' messages, but also to amplify positive narratives, to provide credible alternatives and address issues of concern to vulnerable audiences who are subject to terrorist narratives;

k. Counter-narratives should take into account the gender dimension, and narratives should be developed that address specific concerns and vulnerabilities of both men and women;

l. Continued research into the drivers of terrorism and violent extremism is necessary in order to develop more focused counter-narrative programmes;"

Empowering Victims:

4. Empower and enable victims to transform their loss and suffering into a constructive force for preventing violent extremism by providing them with online forums where they can tell their stories;

Research:

5. Encourage more research on the relationship between the misuse of the Internet and social media by violent extremists and the factors that drive individuals towards violent extremism;

Promoting Grass-Roots Efforts:

6. Promote grass-roots efforts to advance the values of tolerance, pluralism and understanding;

Member States, regional organizations as well as United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes initiated various programmes and activities that use strategic communications, the Internet and social media to address the drivers of violent extremism.

Strategic Communications, the Internet and Social Media

- Development of National Communication Strategies with the private sector
- Promote grass roots efforts to advance tolerance
- Empower and enable victims to transform their loss and suffering
- Protection of freedom of opinion and expression

Implementation illustrations:

- Tailor national PVE communication strategies to promote positive and alternative narratives.

- Provide value-based "digital citizenship" education for children and youth, to foster next-generation leaders in the digital era who can advocate for appropriate online debate.

- Create a platform engaging global media in a dialogue on hate speech and the sharing of effective practices to combat it.

- Provide professional training to media moderators, including radio, TV and online mediums, on how to instantly and verbally sanction guests that are using hate speech and that can encourage others to take violent action against certain categories of people, as well as how to responsibly and respectfully report on victims of terrorism and bring awareness to stigmas they may face.

- Offer accredited and voluntary courses to civil society organizations, media and Information and Communication Technology companies on how to address violent extremist narratives and hate speech online.

- Foster public resilience by providing a platform to document the stories of those affected by violent extremism.

- Engage victims organizations to train victims of violent extremism in creating communication strategies for sharing their experiences and the harsh reality of living among violent extremists.

- Improve media and information literacy to help people, especially young women and men, correctly interpret and contextualize information, identify and overcome disinformation, stereotypes, and intolerance.

- Provide sustainable support to national No-Hate-Speech campaigns, run by civil society organizations together with the Ministries of Youth, by involving other relevant ministries/institutions.

UNESCO: Terrorism and the Media: A Handbook for Journalists

UNESCO's *Terrorism and the Media: Handbook for Journalists* provides universal guidelines that respect the necessary role of journalists in reporting acts of violent extremism and fostering critical analysis on its drivers, while also addressing irresponsible reporting that can empower extremist groups and fuel conflict.

Speculating in the immediate aftermath of an attack, finger-pointing and using sensationalized labels are some of the practices journalists are suggested to avoid, as such practices can nurture radicalisation by fostering marginalisation. Before reporting on an issue or event, the handbook suggests that journalists reflect on key points, which include:

1. Naming, to an extent, is choosing a side;
2. Terrorism and resistance are different concepts;
3. Not all terrorism is "religiously-inspired"; and
4. Stereotypes and generalisation are not facts.

UNESCO: The 2016 Quebec Call for Action

The 2016 *Québec Call for Action* resulted from the international conference on "Internet and the Radicalization of Youth: Preventing, Acting and Living together". This document sets forth major challenges and ways ahead in preventing radicalization processes, and urges citizens and the international community to cooperate and join efforts around common goals, fostering solidarity, tolerance and intercultural dialogue and defending the principles of the United Nations embodied in universal human rights and freedoms.

Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix)

While freedom of expression provides the essential basis for vibrant dialogue and consensus building on divisive issues, hate-laden advocacy can trigger violence spurred by hatred along ethnic lines and incidents involving extremist groups. Between 2011 and 2012, Member States, human rights mechanisms and civil society groups participated in a series of expert workshops organized by OHCHR, focusing on the demarcation between freedom of expression and incitement to hatred. The result was the Rabat Plan of Action in which legislative patterns, judicial practices and policies on restraining incitement to hatred were analyzed. The Plan stresses that limitation of speech must remain an exception and that any restrictions must be provided by law, be narrowly defined to serve a legitimate interest, and be necessary in a democratic society to protect that interest.

Courts should use a six-part threshold test, taking into account the

1. Context of statements,
2. Speaker's position and status in society,
3. Intent to incite hate or violence,
4. Content and form of statements,
5. Extent of dissemination and
6. Likelihood, including imminence, to inspire action.

At the same time, governments must be careful to avoid actions that violent extremists can exploit to "justify" and proliferate hate speech. The Rabat Plan emphasises the importance of upholding other human rights, including freedom of religion and due process, and exercising proportionality in judging hate speech as a crime. It is essential to differentiate between expression that constitutes a criminal offence, expression that may justify civil or administrative action, and expression that raises concerns in terms of tolerance. The Rabat Plan expresses concern that perpetrators of incitement to hatred are not prosecuted and punished, whereas members of minorities are de facto persecuted through the abuse of vague domestic legislation, jurisprudence and policies.

Illustrative United Nations Programmatic Support to Member States on Strategic Communications, Internet and Social Media

- **Total Number of Projects:** 23
- **Number of Countries:** Projects being implemented on a global scale
- **Implementing Agencies:** UN Office on Genocide and Responsibility to Protect, UNAOC, UNESCO, UNCCT, UNDP, Office of the Secretary-General's Youth Envoy
- **UNCCT:** UNCCT is implementing a global project that includes two phases with specific objectives: (1) develop guidance on strategic communications on preventing violent extremism at the global level; (2) develop methodologies and SOPs to support Member States tailoring national PVE communication strategies.
- **Office of the Youth Envoy:** The Office of the Youth Envoy is conducting a global social media campaign aimed at raising awareness of UN SC Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, highlighting the work within and outside the UN to engage and empower young people as agents for peace, before, during, and after a conflict.
- **UNESCO:** UNESCO is globally providing Member States with policy guidelines on the formulation of national and institutional strategies to develop essential media and information literacy skills and value-based digital citizenship, to foster inclusive knowledge societies and next-generation leaders in the digital era to promote human rights and counter online violent extremism.
- **Office of the Youth Envoy:** The Office of the Youth Envoy is implementing a global social media campaign calling on youth to share their experience and of those in their communities in conflict prevention and sustaining peace, share their view on UNSC 2250. Contributions will be featured on line and help as feedback in the preparation of the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.

# Preventing Violent Extremism through Strategic Communications

Vulnerable groups often seek visionary ideas that capture their imagination. Strategic communications can contribute to shape an inspiring vision of the future to refute the appeal of violent extremist messaging and hateful propaganda. In order to be effective, the positive messaging must to be attractive, engaging and tailored. It is therefore important to include the element of strategic communications in the development of National and Regional PVE plans to communicate the vision laid down in the PVE plan. This requires that strategic communications is treated as an overarching and cross cutting issue that is mainstreamed throughout.

What is Strategic communications?

Encouraging shifts in behaviour through a coordinated communications strategy employing a range of tools and mechanisms, including but not limited to government statements, advertising, media, social media and/or observable action.

While strategic communication plans at the national and regional level may take various forms, they should include the following key components:

1. Defining the scope and objective of communications
2. Mapping of resources, tools and stakeholders
3. Undertaking research and target audience analysis
4. Establishing and operationalizing a coherent architecture for implementation
5. Developing the communication strategy
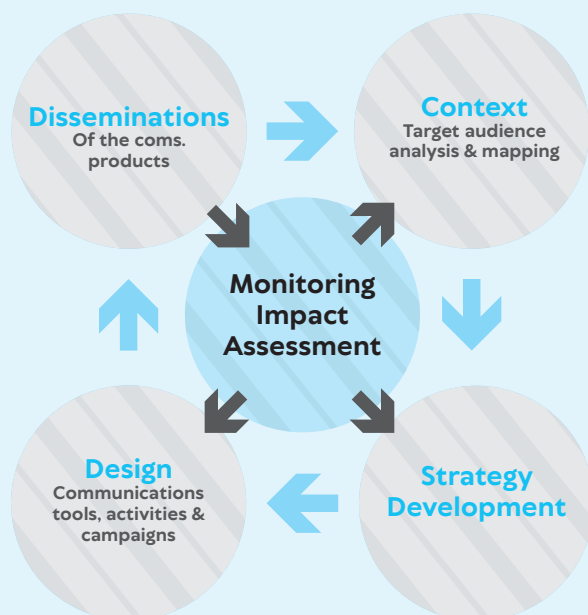
6. Operationalizing of the strategy: design, production and dissemination of the communications products and implementation of the activities
7. Monitoring results and effectiveness
8. Identifying and communicating successes

Setting clear objectives and managing expectations from the beginning are crucial to ensure support and buy-in from stakeholders and will help to clearly identify success and failure. Research and analysis need to be part of all aspects of strategic communications: from planning through to implementation and monitoring and evaluation, to fine tune the operationalization of the strategy as well as guide the next cycle of planning. Research must include audience analysis, focus groups as well as monitoring of the impact.

For messages to be delivered effectively, coordination and coherence are critical. A proper architecture within the national government and partnerships between government, the private sector, civil society organizations and community leaders must be put in place (all-of-society; all-of government). Strategic communications should build on the already existing wealth of experience and involve key stakeholders.

Strategic planning must accept that implementation may be complex and it may take a longer process and time to be able to measure outcome and impact, therefore commitment and sustained political will are crucial on the part of governments. The communications strategies must be tailored to the local context, address the grievances, be delivered by credible messengers and promote opportunities for dialogue. Strategies must take into account actual processes on the ground. Messaging efforts should promote a positive vision of society and should reinvigorate fundamental, universal values of diversity, equality, dignity, and justice.

In accordance with the recommendations of the PVE Plan of Action, national and regional communication strategies should:

1. Advance the values of tolerance, pluralism and understanding;
2. Protect freedom of opinion and expression, pluralism and diversity of the media;
3. Empower and enable victims of terrorism to have their voice heard to prevent violent extremism;
4. Ensure the safety of journalists.
5. Develop media and information literacy skills, especially with young people. ●

Disseminations Of the coms. products

Context Target audience analysis & mapping

Monitoring Impact Assessment

Design Communications tools, activities & campaigns

Strategy Development

5. "All-of-United Nations" Support to Member States and Regional Organizations

On 1 July 2016, the General Assembly adopted, by consensus, resolution 70/291 on the Fifth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Recognizing the importance of preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, the Fifth Review invited Member States as well as regional and sub-regional organizations to consider developing national and regional PVE plans in accordance with the recommendations made in the United Nations PVE Plan, as appropriate. While the primary responsibility to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy lies with Member States, the General Assembly encouraged United Nations entities, in line with their mandates, to implement relevant recommendations of the Plan of Action, including by providing technical assistance to Member States upon their request, and invited Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations to consider developing national and regional Plans of Action to prevent violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, in accordance with their priorities and taking into account, as appropriate, the Secretary-General's Plan of Action.
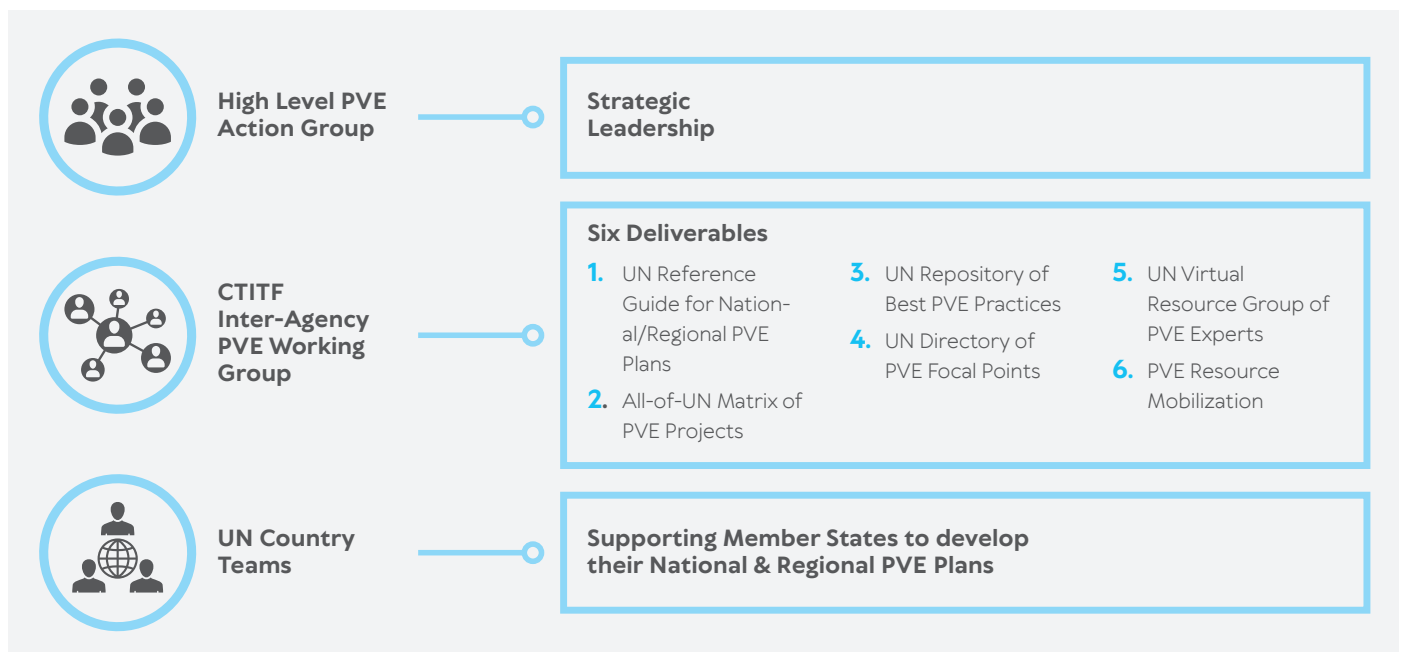
A number of United Nations Departments, Agencies, Funds and Programmes have developed their respective programmes, projects and activities within their given mandates to support the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. At the time of writing, the Office of Counter-Terrorism has mapped 223 PVE projects and initiatives by 15 different UN entities across all seven priority areas of the PVE Plan at the global, regional and national levels.

The United Nations are implementing global programmes to address PVE on a broad and wide-reaching manner. CTITF Entities are able to leverage their comparative advantages to ensure that PVE is implemented in a balanced and holistic way. Below are some examples of the United Nations' current PVE global activities:

**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)
UNOCT is implementing a project that aims to facilitate coordinated "All-of-UN" support to Member States on PVE Policy-Making and Developing National and Regional PVE Plans. This project will support 10 Member States and 2 Regional Organizations to help them develop national PVE plans between 2018 and 2020.

High Level PVE Action Group — **Strategic Leadership**

CTITF Inter-Agency PVE Working Group — **Six Deliverables**

1. UN Reference Guide for National/Regional PVE Plans
2. All-of-UN Matrix of PVE Projects
3. UN Repository of Best PVE Practices
4. UN Directory of PVE Focal Points
5. UN Virtual Resource Group of PVE Experts
6. PVE Resource Mobilization

UN Country Teams — **Supporting Member States to develop their National & Regional PVE Plans**

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Based on the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and Sustainable Development Goal 16, UNDP developed a comprehensive strategic framework "Preventing Violent extremism through Inclusive Development and the Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity". Subsequently, UNDP launched its first four year (2017-2020) Global Programme which translates UNDP's strategic framework into programmatic PVE outputs.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO has projects to build capacity on Global Citizenship Education and PVE in response to the needs expressed by UNESCO Member States. UNESCO is working with the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding to provide stakeholders with access to relevant educational resources on the prevention of violent extremism through education.

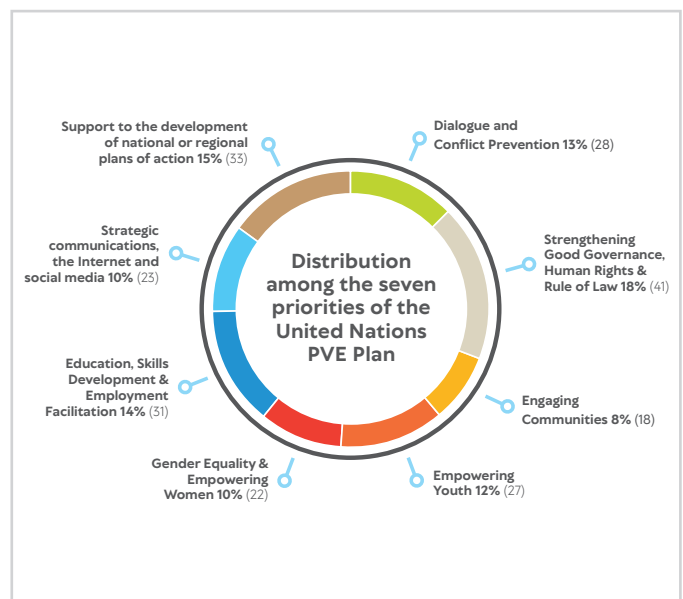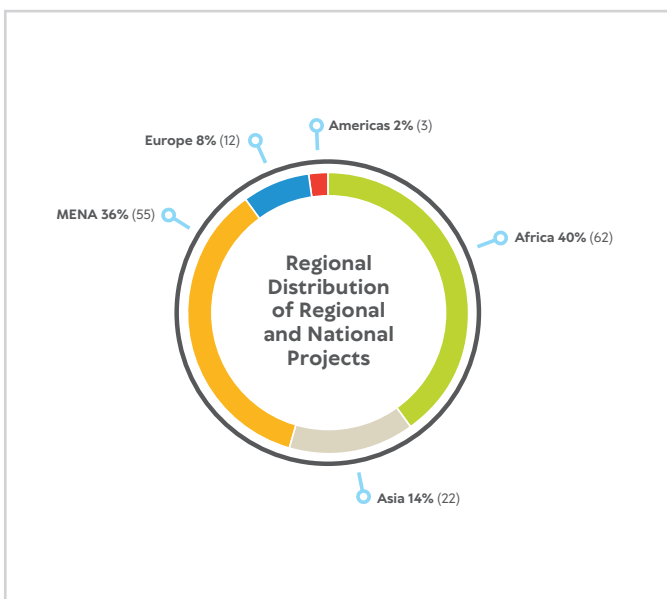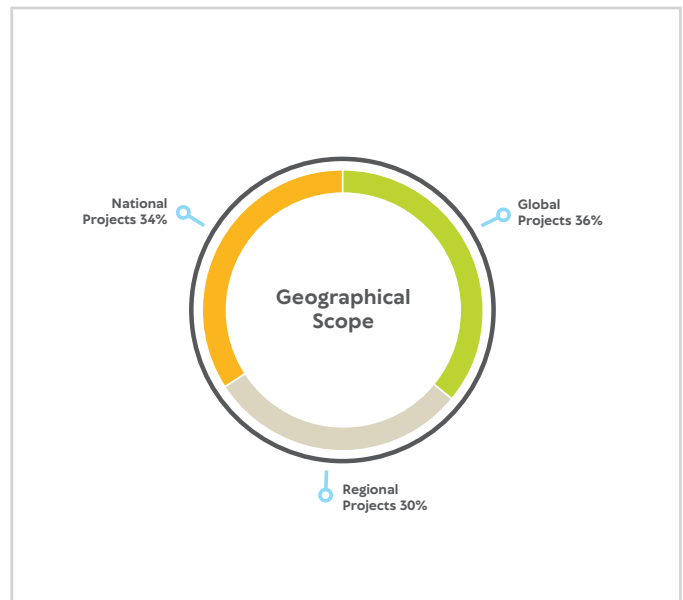## United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

UNODC has global programmes that focus on strengthening capacity and capacity building for Member State criminal justice systems to ensure human rights compliance, protecting children from exploitation by terrorists or violent extremists, and crime. UNODC supports the development of legal and policy frameworks and specialized tools.

United Nations Women (UN Women)

UN Women is implementing global projects to address the gap in data and analysis on effective integration of a gender perspective into policies and programming to counter terrorism and violent extremism, support the CTC and CTED in integrating gender considerations within its country-specific assessments, and a global programme on a gendered approach to violent extremism to streamline

Geographical Scope

- National Projects 34%
- Global Projects 36%
- Regional Projects 30%

Regional Distribution of Regional and National Projects

- Americas 2% (3)
- Europe 8% (12)
- MENA 36% (55)
- Africa 40% (62)
- Asia 14% (22)

Distribution among the seven priorities of the United Nations PVE Plan

- Support to the development of national or regional plans of action 15% (33)
- Dialogue and Conflict Prevention 13% (28)
- Strategic communications, the Internet and social media 10% (23)
- Strengthening Good Governance, Human Rights & Rule of Law 18% (41)
- Education, Skills Development & Employment Facilitation 14% (31)
- Engaging Communities 8% (18)
- Gender Equality & Empowering Women 10% (22)
- Empowering Youth 12% (27)

gender into existing and future work.

To ensure that these initiatives are undertaken through a coherent and well-coordinated "All-of-UN" approach, which is advocated in the PVE Plan, the Secretary-General established a High-Level PVE Action Group, under his leadership, to spearhead the implementation of the PVE Plan at United Nations Headquarters and in the field. He tasked the CTITF Inter-Agency PVE Working Group, consisting of all 38 CTITF entities, to support the work of the High-Level PVE Action Group and operationalize its strategic decisions through an "All-of-UN" approach. In this regard, the CTITF PVE Working Group focuses its efforts on six concrete deliverables:

- Mapping the United Nations' PVE-specific and PVE-related activities and programmes, within the seven priority areas of the United Nations PVE Plan, at the global, regional and national levels;

- Creating and maintaining a list of PVE focal points in United Nations Departments, Agencies, Funds and Programmes at Headquarters and in the field;

- Creating and maintaining a Repository of Best Practices and Lessons Learned on PVE;

- Creating and maintaining a Global PVE Expert Resource Group;

- Organizing inter-agency expert retreats on the development of national and regional PVE plans;

- Encouraging the development of United Nations inter-agency resource mobilization plans for PVE programming.

At the field level, a number of United Nations Resident Coordinators and their United Nations Country Teams created PVE coordination mechanisms to maximize synergies and provide the best PVE support possible to requesting Member States. The UNDP Global Programme on PVE is also working on development solutions and with Member States to implement national PVE Plans of Action.

The Secretary-General tasked the Office of Counter-Terrorism to act as Secretariat for both his High-Level PVE Action Group and the CTITF PVE Working Group. It acts as Focal Point for Member States on United Nations system wide PVE support and initiatives.

6. Expertise, Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

The development of National and Regional PVE Plans of Action requires a skill set that brings together know-how of strategic policy-making and the ability to address the drivers of a transnational, multidimensional and dynamic threat in a variety of fields, including sustaining peace, sustainable development, the protection of human rights and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Such highly specialized expertise is not readily available. In addition to its in-house expertise, the UNOCT has established a List of International PVE Advisors, which comprise a diverse group of international experts that possess varied PVE expertise and a variety of language skills. Based on a request from a Member State or regional organization to support the development of a National or Regional PVE Action Plan and subject to the availability of resources, the UNOCT will consider deploying advisor(s) to provide tailored capacity-building support in accordance with the local context and national ownership. Moreover, the UNOCT is able to facilitate the exchange of best practices between countries and regions through south-south as well as triangular exchanges.

Ensuring the success of PVE plans also requires financial resources. Even though investment in prevention is more cost-effective than allocating resources to mitigating consequences, efficient resource allocation and mobilization are important to sustain both the development and implementation of national and regional PVE plans. To ensure sustainable and progressive funding for PVE plans at all stages, governments and regional organizations should evaluate how to use existing funds more efficiently, and based on the interdependence of political, social and economic drivers of violent extremism, identify and bolster programme linkages when allocating and mobilizing resources. The UNOCT is fostering the development of United Nations inter-agency resource mobilization plans. In line with the "All-of-UN" approach, joint resource mobilization and programme development will prevent duplication and leverage synergies across the United Nations system to improve the PVE support provided to Member States and organizations, in each of the seven strategic priority areas outlined in the United Nations PVE Plan.

The Office of Counter-Terrorism is also working with partners outside of the United Nations to support Member States and organizations with securing the resources and assistance they need for the development and implementation of PVE plans. As focal point for the coordination of the United Nations system's PVE efforts, the UNOCT has already established partnerships with international, regional, sub-regional, national, and local organizations to develop and implement PVE projects around the world, and several of these organizations attended the CTITF Expert Retreat. The UNOCT will continue to expand its partnerships to help the PVE plans of Member States achieve maximum impact on the ground.

7. Conclusion:

Towards Comprehensive and Principled PVE Policies at the National and Regional Levels

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The CTITF Inter-Agency Expert Retreat on the Development of National and Regional PVE Plans of Action represents merely the beginning of the international community's effort to uncover the 'how' of preventing violent extremism, and enhance the relevance and impact of PVE plans.

These guiding principles provide non-binding guidance for Member States, regional organizations, United Nations entities and other organizations to craft coherent and adaptable policy frameworks for PVE plans.

As emphasized throughout the document, the principles and illustrations provided in this Reference Guide do not represent a prescriptive or "one-size-fits-all" model. Out of full respect for the local context and national sovereignty, the guiding principles serve as a reference for Member States to shape and refine living PVE plans that conform to their unique circumstances and needs.

To effect real change on the ground, national and regional PVE plans require effective implementation in all seven priority areas of the United Nations PVE Plan and General Assembly resolution 70/291. It is thus important to directly connect PVE plans with the appropriate thematic programming for addressing the drivers of violent extremism, as recommended in the United Nations PVE Plan.

The transnational, dynamic and multidimensional nature of violent extremism makes it impossible for one country or region to address this threat alone. International cooperation is essential for the exchange of effective practices and lessons learned and will ultimately produce lasting positive change.

Effective PVE plans are urgently needed to help all Member States address this scourge in a comprehensive manner. The United Nations, empowered by the General Assembly's consensus on the need to "address all drivers of violent extremism conducive to terrorism, both internal and external, in a balanced manner" and the full support of the 38 entities of the CTITF for an "All-of-UN" approach, is poised to support Member States and regional organizations, upon their request, in developing impactful PVE Plans. ●